POLLY IN ALASKA

LILLIAN ELIZABETH ROY
Author of WOODCRAFT SERIES, Etc.

THE POLLY BREWSTER SERIES

POLLY IN ALASKA

By LILLIAN ELIZABETH ROY

What would you do if you were enjoying a voyage to Alaska with a party of friends and heard the sudden cry, "Iceberg! Iceberg!" instantly followed by a crash, a quake and a babel of shouts?

Well, read POLLY IN ALASKA and learn what she did in such an extremity. Also how she discovered the dying whale that supplied the castaways with fuel and flesh.

Of course you will want to know whether the boys adrift on the wrecked vessel were saved! And you will want to hear all about the final matchmaking which Polly and Eleanor connived at, and eventually brought about the desired wedding between their two best friends. All these thrills happened to Polly in Alaska.

LOOK ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS JACKET

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ALL HELD THEIR BREATHS WHILE POLLY WAS PULLEYED ACROSS THE DEEP CHASM.

Polly in Alaska. *Frontispiece*—(*Page* 102)

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By

LILLIAN ELIZABETH ROY

AUTHOR OF
THE POLLY BREWSTER BOOKS,
THE GIRL SCOUTS BOOKS,
THE LITTLE WASHINGTONS
SERIES, ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY
H. S. BARBOUR

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POLLY IN ALASKA

CHAPTER I

A PUBLISHED SECRET

"WELL, of all things!"

The exclamation came from a very pretty girl who was standing with a group of friends at the Terminal Station in Los Angeles, waiting for the Denver Express long overdue from the east. At Dodo Alexander's exclamation her young girl friends turned to see what had caused her surprise. Dodo was short for Dorothy, and no one in this party of tourists would have known her by any other than her nickname.

Ebeneezer Alexander, Dodo's father, shortly before the girl's amazed remark, had excused himself from his friends and had hurried down the platform in order to waylay a man he wished to see upon a business matter. But now the waiting tourists saw him returning in company

with three young men. Each young man carried a large suitcase and they seemed much interested in the older man's conversation; nevertheless their eyes roamed keenly over the various groups of people on the platform, evidently in quest of those familiar faces for which they were pining.

Dodo's cry attracted the attention of the three newcomers and they hastened their gait, leaving short-legged little Mr. Alex. out of the race. In another moment the young men were welcomed by Polly Brewster, Eleanor Maynard, and Dodo Alexander, in a manner to delight even Tom Latimer, the tallest and more serious of the three unexpected arrivals. Pete Maynard and Paul Stewart were the other two young men with Tom.

"Oh Pete!" cried Eleanor, known to us as Nolla, "I'm so glad to see you here." As she spoke, Nolla threw both arms around her brother's neck; but he—undeserving young chap—had eyes for no one else but Dorothy Alexander. She stood near by with a smile on her lips, and joy in her eyes as she watched Pete.

Meanwhile Tom Latimer stood holding Polly's hands and gazing at her as though he

never expected to see her again. "Glad to see me, Polly?" whispered he, his tone plainly telling how eager he was for an affirmative reply from her.

"Of course we're glad to see you, Tom," returned Polly, wisely making the answer in the plural, as far as the gladness was concerned. Tom's face lost some of its effusive joy at her reply.

"Come on, Dodo!" laughed Paul Stewart, seeing his two chums engaged for the moment. "You and I must take part in this mutual joy-making. Throw your arms around my neck, and let me give you a bear-hug—straight from the Slide, where the bears teach lovers how to squeeze."

Paul's silly exclamations made his friends laugh merrily, but he noted they had an effect. Nolla and Pete divided their attention now with Dodo and himself, and this is what he wanted.

Little Mr. Alexander rubbed his hands delightedly, as he watched his precious Dodo exchanging an understanding glance with Pete Maynard; then the two walked on side by side, quite indifferent to the others. And Eleanor walked by Paul Stewart's side, thus leaving

Polly and Tom to follow with Mr. Alexander.

To keep the conversation in safe channels, Polly asked Tom, "How did you boys come to get off down at the extreme end of the platform? We have been waiting ages at the station."

"Why," returned Tom, keeping his eyes on Polly's face, "just outside the city limits our express was halted by a wrecked coal train. Coal was scattered everywhere, and it was necessary for us to come to a sudden stop, to avoid being derailed. The express was late, at that, so those travelers that insisted upon being landed at the Terminal at a scheduled time were provided with a shuttle train that switched off the main line and brought us here on a side-track. That is how we came in back of the Express Office where no one waiting at the station could see us arrive."

"It was turrible important for them young chaps to arrive on schedule time, Polly, 'cause they had to make sure you gals hadn't no engagements for this evenin', you know," teased Mr. Alexander, jabbing Polly in the ribs. His victim gasped, but had to force a smile because the dear little man meant to be genial.

By this time the young couples were met by the elder members in this party of Mr. Dalken's.

Then every one talked at once, the new-comers telling how they were delayed, and the members that had been waiting for them telling of experiences they had had since last the two parties met. All now arrived at the automobiles which Mr. Dalken had engaged; but no one could remember a word of what any one else had said since they all had shaken hands.

Mr. Dalken, the host of this large party, placed his guests in the cars according to his good judgment and then gave the signal to the chauffeurs to start for the hotel. During the transit of these merry tourists from the railway terminal to the hotel, we may as well take the time to introduce ourselves to them—or to be more exact, have them introduced to *us*.

First in order comes our old friend, Polly Brewster, of whom you have heard from having read her first book, called "Polly of Pebbly Pit." Polly is now quite grown up, and being such a very attractive young lady, as well as being so clever in many ways, she naturally has many admirers and friends. But Polly thinks so little of beaux and beautifiers that she is called "callous" by the young beaux that flock to her side wherever she goes.

For the benefit of those who have not had the pleasure of reading all about Polly in her former books, we will have to give you a short synopsis of them; though this synopsis can never do justice to the adventures related in Polly's life-story; and at some time you really must secure these former books.

Polly Brewster lived in Colorado, and her home was in the crater of an extinct volcano known as "Pebbly Pit." Up to the time when she was fourteen Polly had never been away from the ranch home. But that summer came a letter from Anne Stewart, the young school-teacher from Denver, who had taught the school at Bear Forks the year past. In this letter Anne wrote that she and two friends from Chicago wished to spend the summer at the ranch.

Anne arrived and introduced the two girls—Barbara and Eleanor Maynard, daughters of a rich banker and a society mother in Chicago. Eleanor, always known as Nolla, was Polly's age, and that summer a lasting friendship was founded between the two girls.

Brother John, just out of college, fell in love with Anne Stewart; but Anne could not promise to marry any one until her mother and brother

were provided for. However, John won the confession that Anne loved him, so he was satisfied for the time.

Because of Anne's friendship with a few influential persons, she was offered a vacancy in one of New York's exclusive schools for girls. Eleanor Maynard was going east with Anne, to attend the school; and just before the girls left Pebbly Pit to go to New York, Polly won the consent of her parents to go with them. Their thrilling adventures in the Big City are told in the volume called "Polly and Eleanor in New York."

It was in New York, soon after starting school, that the girls met Mr. Fabian, a teacher in the art school which Polly and Eleanor wished to enter. Mr. Fabian finally enlisted the girls' interest in interior decorating as a profession; and they became so absorbed in their studies along this line that they swore to devote their lives to the work, and never waste time or self on love affairs or beaux. Because of this agreement with one another, the two girls often had to stop and consider whither she might be drifting, when moonlight nights, and soft music, and a handsome admirer combined to make her forget

her vow to be true to a professional career, and pass by all lovers, husbands and housekeeping.

Through Mr. Fabian, the two girls met Mr. Ashby, owner of the famous Ashby Shops, Fifth Avenue, New York City; and Mr. Dalken, the lonely though interesting financier. And since Mr. Fabian's wife and daughter were in Paris, where Nancy Fabian was finishing an art course, Mr. Fabian invited the two girls to take a trip to join his family in Paris. Mr. and Mrs. Ashby, and their daughter Ruth, who was the age of Polly and Eleanor, were going to accompany Mr. Fabian, so the two girl friends gladly accepted the invitation. Their exploits in Europe are told in the book called "Polly and her Friends Abroad."

On board the steamer, the girls met the Alexanders. Mrs. Alex., always wishing to be called by that abbreviated name, because she considered it so original was a type of get-rich-quick woman, forever posing as a social luminary, but falling short of her *calling* through ignorance and foolishness. Dorothy Alexander, an only child, was spared a similar life by meeting Polly and Eleanor in time to inspire her with ideals. Little Ebeneezer Alexander, the energetic and

unlearned miner who had struck "pay dirt" during the stampede of gold-seekers to Cripple Creek, remained as plain and matter-of-fact after he could reckon his wealth in millions, as he was when he wore a red flannel shirt and went about prospecting with his pick and shovel. Through meeting, thus, on the steamer, the Alexanders attached themselves to the Fabian party.

Finally, back in New York City once more, the girls accepted the friendly offer of Mr. Ashby to loan them a small office and help them in launching a private business. Polly and Eleanor gladly accepted this plan, because it allowed them time to continue their studies at Cooper Union, and also provided a place where they might interview prospective customers. One of their first clients was a Mrs. Courtney, a very wealthy English lady, now residing in New York City. Mrs. Courtney felt deeply interested in the two practical decorators and, later, proved to be one of the great factors in their lives. All they did is told in the story called "Polly and Eleanor in Business."

Mr. Dalken proved to be a very valuable friend about this time. He was planning a cruise

to the south, and he invited several friends—the Fabians, the Ashbys, and the two girls—to accompany him. Polly and Eleanor were looking forward to this cruise, when to the delight of all the others Mrs. Courtney was added to the list of tourists in the party. Polly's cruise is told about in the book by that name.

Down the coast they sailed, stopping at gay Palm Beach in the height of its season, then crossing to Cuba and visiting the West Indies. Thence they went to see the Panama Canal and, having reached the old city of Panama, found there would be time enough to permit them to sail down the west coast of South America for a short distance before turning to go back home.

But the great Chili earthquake changed their plans, and the damage to the yacht compelled the tourists to go across the continent by train and wait in Buenos Aires until the yacht was repaired and could call to take them on board bound for New York. In this book, called "Polly in South America," you hear of the way Jack Baxter joined the touring party, and proved to be a welcome member. Also in this book we hear how Mr. Dalken, mature admirer of Mrs. Courtney, realized that he was in love with the

handsome English woman. Polly and Eleanor then tried their hands at match-making between these two good friends of theirs.

Back in New York once more, the party left the yacht, with regrets that their good times must end for an indefinite time. Mr. Dalken bid them all to luncheon at his apartment and to say the last farewells for the time being. They gladly accepted this invitation to lunch, knowing from past experiences how delicious Mr. Dalken's luncheon parties were; and so it came about that they were all present when Mr. Dalken read a telegram, which called him west as soon as possible.

Before the last farewell was said, therefore, it had been decided that Mrs. Courtney, as chaperon to Polly and Eleanor, and Jack Baxter, would accompany Mr. Dalken as far as Pebbly Pit—perhaps farther, if they found the trip enjoyable. The Fabians, the Ashbys and other friends, declined the hearty invitation to join the party about to start west.

In the book called "Polly in the Southwest" you will read of their amusing experiences with Mrs. Alexander and her new ideal A. A. A, who joined their party at Denver. Dodo and her

father also provided ample entertainment for the girls on this trip. They visited the wonderful sights in New Mexico, Arizona, and California, and finally reached Los Angeles, where they awaited the coming of such friends as had planned to join the Expedition to Colombia. This brings us right up to the moment when three of the young engineers arrived.

But stop! Who is Paul Stewart and Pete Maynard?

Well, if you haven't read the books mentioned, you would not know that Paul Stewart is Anne's brother, now graduated from college and in love with Eleanor Maynard. Pete Maynard, Eleanor's brother, also a young engineer of mines, believed himself in love with Dodo Alexander. Tom Latimer, the faithful admirer and constant beau of Polly Brewster (though so often repulsed in his attempts at love-making, because Polly feels she must not fall in love if she expects to be a famous decorator), renews his confessions of eternal love; and Polly, as usual, advises him to take the trip to South America first, and she will consider his offer in his absence. Poor Tom! He has heard this same advice again and again,

and he is sadly reminded of the "brook" which goes on forever!

Mr. Dalken so arranged to place his friends in the cars that Mrs. Alexander had been assigned to the car with the elder members of the party; the younger members were in the car ahead, enjoying themselves immensely. Mr. Dalken's car passed the leading automobile just before reaching the hotel; and this gave the older friends the opportunity to get out first. Hence Mrs. Alexander was standing on the sidewalk in front of the hotel, when the other car holding the merry young people drove up and stopped.

Mrs. Alexander caught a glimpse of Dodo listening intently to something Pete Maynard was whispering in her ear. This so shocked the would-be society leader that she instantly marched to the curb and thrust her hand inside the open window of the car.

"Dodo! excuse yourself and follow me to my room," was her angry command.

Dodo looked amazed; then she suddenly realized that her mother had taken alarm at finding Pete so closely seated beside her. Without leaping from the car, as Mrs. Alexander thought her daughter should do, Dodo sat back

and smiled; then she said: "Ma, I'm sure Mr. Dalken will do far better than I, in being your escort to your room."

Mr. Dalken quickly comprehended the situation, and joined Mrs. Alexander on the curb. "I'm *sure* I can take Dodo's place, my dear Mrs. Alexander. Just you let me try, and see for yourself." So saying, the handsome New Yorker slipped a hand under Mrs. Alexander's elbow and politely urged her to go with him.

Mrs. Alexander sent one undecided glance in Dodo's direction, then capitulated to the persuasions of the man of wealth and social position. She never could refuse such a combination!

The moment her mother was out of sight Dodo explained to Pete, Paul and Tom, "Ma is determined to marry me off to a faded-haired, vacant-eyed, weak-kneed wisp of a dandy that claims to be the only descendant of a fine old English family. I haven't had time to prove to myself that his claims are true; and Ma took him at his own appraisal—not at his face-value." Dodo laughed.

Pete scowled and remarked to all in general: "Mrs. Alex. must think we're going to let some namby-pamby dude step in and walk right off

with Dodo, before our very eyes! Well; she's got another guess coming, I'll say!"

The others laughed; and Eleanor, patting her brother on top of the head, said admiringly: "Atta Boy, Pete!"

While they all laughed heartily at this slang, Mrs. Courtney came up to the door of the car and smiled at their happy faces. "Aren't you going to get out? The car must be very comfortable, to keep you there so long."

Before either questioner or those questioned could answer, Mr. Alexander hurried up and spoke anxiously to Mrs. Courtney.

"You ain't all figgerin' on lettin' the gals run around much with the boys, be you?"

"Why, not much, that I know of," returned Mrs. Courtney, surprised at such a question.

"Because we-all got word this noon, Mrs. Courtney, that we oughta be in San Francisco day after to-morrow, to meet some very big finanseers what might invest in the Colombian Development. If the young folks plan to lose many days here, goin' after the Movies and such jaunts, we'll have to pass up the business date."

"Oh, Mr. Alex.!" exclaimed Mrs. Courtney," we all know that business comes first, and our

plans are subject to your and Mr. Dalken's approval."

"Then I'll go ahead and wire back that we'll be there," was the little man's rejoinder, with a sigh of relief.

"Certainly; and do let us know if we can assist in any way to facilitate the departure," returned Mrs. Courtney.

"Yes, you kin!" said he. "Get the gals to pack up in the mornin', and be ready to leave at noon. Then we can arrive in 'Frisco, in time for that date."

"We'll do that," agreed the lady. "Does Mr. Dalken know of this plan?"

"No, not yet; but I'm on my way to tell him now. He knows how I ben wirin' back and forth, and he's ben hopin' we'd get a wire like-es-how I got here." Mr. Alexander seemed to hesitate before speaking again; then he finally burst out with: "Say, Mrs. Courtney! I don't want my missus to know we-all have planned to leave here by noon to-morrow. You know how she raises Cain every time you-all do as I advise? Well, she jest won't start, if she thinks *I* said so, and that will back up the hull waggin again."

"Leave her to me, Mr. Alex." was Mrs.

Courtney's soothing reply. "You don't have to worry over your wife's refusal to go with us at the time stated."

"My! You-all should a ben a statesman, Lady! I becher them folks down in Washerton City would have to sit up and take notice, ef you ran things for this country!" was Mr. Alexander's admiring reply.

The three young couples laughed at the evident admiration in the little man's voice and expression, and they all started for the hotel lobby.

Mr. Dalken had planned a dinner party and a theatre afterward, so a merry group of friends carried out the contract to a satisfactory finish that night. Before the ending of the enjoyable treat, however, Mrs. Courtney found the opportunity for which she had been seeking. This was to win Mrs. Alex. over to leaving Los Angeles at noon on the following day. The moment came in the intermission between the second and third acts of the play. The men had accompanied the girls to the promenade of the theatre, and Mrs. Courtney was alone with Mrs. Alex. in the box.

"I wish we were in San Francisco, instead of here in this plebian place," remarked Mrs.

Courtney lifting her eyebrows in disapproval of Los Angeles society.

Mrs. Alexander wondered at this unusual speech, but she felt curious to know why this lady with the manners of a queen felt as she did regarding the two sister cities of California. So she merely murmured some indistinct reply, and then boldly asked why?

"Oh, you see, the social quality in San Francisco is *so* superior. One doesn't find the mixed element rubbing elbows with one, as one does here. I suppose this is the result of such a motley collection of movie actors, all having so much money that caste fails to count as it should." As she spoke, Mrs. Courtney silently petitioned Los Angeles to pardon her slander of its character.

"Yes, I noticed that, too," agreed Mrs. Alexander. "And I wondered if it would be quite the thing to permit the girls to be seen on the streets so much. You see, they might be mistaken for movie vamps—they are so good-looking, you know."

"That's another thing—and I'm glad you spoke of it," instantly retorted Mrs. Courtney, grateful for such a cue. "We may find one or more of the girls becoming infatuated with the

movies, and then they'll not be willing to go away from here."

"Dear, dear!" sighed Mrs. Alex., frowningly. "What would you suggest, dear Mrs. Courtney."

"Without saying a word to the young folks, I should plan to leave here to-morrow—by noon, if possible. And inform the men in our party that we are going to start for San Francisco; if they care to go with us, they will be welcome. The young folks will have to accompany us, naturally."

This manner of carrying things off with a high hand made a ready appeal to Mrs. Alexander, because *she* was forever trying to do so without corresponding results in her family. Now she felt that she had an ally in this autocratic lady.

"We'll do it!" whispered Mrs. Alexander, when she saw the rest of the box party returning from the promenade. "Don't let any one wheedle you out of that determination."

The two ladies exchanged significant glances, and then the conversation became general, with the returned young people.

That night, after reaching the suite her husband had engaged for her, Mrs. Alexander allowed herself to drop gracefully—so she

thought, as she watched herself in the long mirror opposite—upon a divan and began her introduction to the breaking of her news.

"Ebeneezer, Mrs. Courtney and I have decided to leave Los Angeles to-morrow. We shall pack in the morning, and start by noon. The girls will have to go with us, of course; but you men—if you have business to attend to here—must follow later. We reached a final decision to-night, and that's all there is to it."

Mr. Alexander almost laughed aloud, but he knew that the least smile would ruin the whole plot; and he felt too grateful to Mrs. Courtney to risk the downfall of her carefully laid scheme. He therefore appeared to be annoyed at the information and said: "I ain't so sure we kin go, Maggie. Ain't you enjoyin' yourself here? I hate to leave in such a hurry, when I hain't had time to watch the way they take movies in Hollywood."

"Movies! Hollywood! That's just it—so common," scorned Mrs. Alexander, impatiently.

"Common? Why, Maggie, the hull world's crazy to come to Hollywood and try to get in the movies. Yet you up and say they are common! I've ben plannin' a chanst to take a spin

out thar myself, some day, and pay a feller to let me act up in a picture, so's I kin sit back in a show some fine night and watch myself on the screen, makin' love to one of them bob-haired, red-painted minxs. I kin see myself tryin' to kiss them red-dyed cherry lips, and makin' eyes at her charcoaled eyelashes. Oh, Boy! what fun!" And the fine little actor slapped his knee and bent double with feigned laughter.

"Ebeneezer Alexander! How can you forget you are a decent husband and a grizzly-haired father!" snapped Mrs. Alex., in a rage of scorn. "I do believe you *would* cut up like that, if I let you stay here another day."

The little man's mouth screwed up tightly in his effort to keep from laughing hilariously; to appear natural, therefore, he made a sound as though kissing some one, and he closed his merry eyes halfway, to make his wife think he was visualizing his movie queen. Before he could speak, however, his better half shouted: "If you ever dare carry on like that with a painted doll, I'll go and divorce you on the spot—so there!"

"Oh, you needn't worry about any one finding it out, Maggie, when I go in the movies. I'll pay to keep it quiet, but I do want to see what

I look like on the stage. Every one has a feelin' that he could be famous as an actor, onny he never got the chanst. Now you and me will be the onny ones what know who the hero on the screen is—and I'll be sittin' in front, laffin' at myself."

"Ebneezer Alexander! you go straight to your room there, and pack your duds! I shall drag you out of Los Angeles to-morrow when I go—so now!" with this ultimatum, Mrs. Alexander shoved her spouse into his own room, and slammed the door upon his heels.

CHAPTER II

PLANS AND PROBLEMS

THE result of that night's conference was the unexpected exodus of the Dalken party from Los Angeles and its entrance into San Francisco. Hotel accommodations had been engaged by telephone the day before their arrival, and the tourists now found they were to have the best suites the house had to offer them.

"Say, boys," called Jack Baxter, the happy-go-lucky member of the Dalken party, "better make the most of all this luxury of private baths, downy beds, and a servant at every turn. Once we reach the end of the Colombian Railway, a few weeks from now, we will have to scratch the woods for a bed, a bath, or both."

The young people laughed, and Polly asked teasingly, "I wonder what our dandefied Jack will do without face powder and manicure girls."

"Oh, haven't you heard of Jack's mad ambition?" quickly added Nolla. "He plans to raise

a full beard down south, to save the energy it would use to shave every day."

The mental picture of their immaculate Jack appearing with a long beard caused general mirth. The laughter was interrupted now, however, by having Mrs. Courtney advise every one to dress for dinner, since it was rather late. That night launched two campaigns: one in which Mr. Dalken, Mr. Fuzzier, and Mr. Alexander were the leaders to secure capital for the South American investment; and the other led by Mrs. Courtney and Mrs. Alex, to secure the utmost pleasure for the girls out of the gay city of the Golden Gate.

During the ten days in San Francisco the three girls and their admirers found many opportunities to enjoy private tête-à-têtes. Paul and Eleanor took advantage of such enjoyable treats, and therefore arrived at an understanding before good-by had to be said. Dodo and Pete managed to evade Mrs. Alex.'s watchful eyes and they, too, had agreed to see no other beau and think of no other admirer during the long separation about to take place. But with young people it is often a case of "out of sight, out of mind." Polly and Tom, however, seemed to be different

from their friends. Tom found it rather difficult to induce Polly to give him a private interview such as he desired; and Polly managed to keep Mrs. Courtney or others in the party, at hand to interfere with any planned lovers' scene, such as she knew Tom was bent upon having with her before sailing for South America.

Thus the time passed quickly, and then came the day when the two partners of Mr. Dalken in this enterprise in Colombia, and the young mining engineers, plus Jack Baxter, would have to go on board the steamer and leave for their dangerous yet thrilling adventures in South America. Paul and Pete seemed contented with Fate; but Tom frowned and grumbled even as he packed his trunk before it was taken downstairs by the porter, to be sent on board the vessel.

"What's up, Tom, old man?" asked Jack Baxter, knowing too well that Polly had not accepted Tom's magnificent diamond ring as had been prophesied by all her friends she would.

Tom scowled at Jack, but made no answer. Then Jack added: "Why worry? She's more in love with you than Nolla or Dodo are with their sweethearts; yet those two girls wear certain

hoops of promise upon their faithless fingers, and at first peep of flirtatious beaux both those rings will vanish into the bottom of traveling trunks. Now Polly is different: she would not take a ring unless she was going to remain as faithful to it as a martyr is to the cause. What good is the ring, then? I'd wager all my cash on Polly's faithfulness to you, only you can't see it as we-all do. Cheer up, and let's give them a happy good-by by which to remember this farewell after we are down where the mites and malaria grow!" Jack laughed merrily as he spoke.

Tom changed his gloom to sunny smiles at once, and Jack felt satisfied with his cure. Then the young men went downstairs to enjoy the last few moments with their friends so soon to be left behind.

Thus it happened that Polly remembered Tom's interested though cheerful face as the last glimpse she had of him in many months. And the solitaire which Tom had fully expected to leave upon her finger as a symbol that she was betrothed to him remained in Mr. Dalken's trunk, to be used at some future time, or in case Polly relented in her stern attitude and agreed to wear it for Tom's sake after he had gone.

Good-bys were over and the adventurers bound for unknown dangers stood at the rail of the vessel waving last farewells to those on shore. Then the steamer became too small for eyes to distinguish those upon the deck, and the watchers on shore turned and left the pier.

On the way back to the hotel Nolla and Dodo upbraided Polly for her coldness of heart. "Poor Tom!" chorused they, "he may never return, and then you'll be sorry you treated him shabbily."

Polly smiled. She would have resented such criticism not so many years before, but she was more worldly wise now, after such close friendship with the astute and wise Mrs. Courtney. Eleanor saw the smile and felt peeved at the way her admonition had been received.

"Polly, Tom is right! You make sport of love, and you laugh at others for being in love, yet you seem to forget that this is only because your turn has not come. Some day you'll meet a man and fall violently in love with him, and then he may turn his back on *you!*"

"If such a time *should* come, Nolla, no one but myself is ever going to know it," laughed Polly, amused but not concerned.

"You never had a heart! That's why," teased Dodo.

"No? Maybe I've had one and left it somewhere," retorted Polly.

"Then why were you so cold and cruel to Tom?" demanded Nolla.

Polly seemed to feel impatient at this prolonged catechism, and she turned the tables deftly. "Nolla, what have you done with a new diamond ring I saw you wear whenever Paul was with you?"

Nolla flushed and then laughed. "Checkmate, eh? I've got it in my hand bag. Want to see how many carats it is?" As she spoke, she opened her bag and took out the small diamond ring.

"Hum-m-m! And I suppose Dodo has one ten times this size!" surmised Polly, sending her other friend a searching glance.

Dodo laughed. "No, Pete would have squandered half the sum he had for his ticket to South America, but I begged him to save it and buy a diamond down in Colombia where they are cheap."

Polly passed her friend's engagement ring back to her and murmured: "I'm sure that ring

will not be injured by overwear while we are in Alaska. Dalky thinks we shall meet droves of American and English tourists to Alaska, because it is quite the rage to go up since our late President Harding opened the way for Society to hear about the wonders to be enjoyed there. There will be plenty of young men adventuring along the route, too, and I'm glad I am free to enjoy myself."

Nolla frowned and Dodo laughed, but this conversation was cut short now by Mrs. Courtney's appearance.

"Girls, I just suggested to Mrs. Alexander that we stop at the shops and do any buying we might wish to attend to before sailing for the North. Dalky is off to see about the yacht we inspected the other day, and we ought to finish all preliminary matters to-day. We may be called upon to start to-morrow, you know."

Therefore all thoughts of beaus and rings were forgotten in the pleasant fever of shopping in the splendid stores of San Francisco. The purchases were ordered to be sent to the hotel that same evening, and then the shoppers started away from the magnet of lingerie and latest fashions so attractively displayed in the shops.

Arrived at the hotel once more they found a budget of letters awaiting them. These had been addressed to Los Angeles and then had been forwarded from the hotel there to their present address in San Francisco. There were letters for the boys and the two men having charge of the trip to Colombia, so these must be forwarded to them. While Mrs. Courtney spoke of the delays forwarded letters always met with, Mr. Dalken came in and heard of the belated mail.

Mrs. Courtney saw at once that something had happened to annoy the host of the party, but she said nothing, because he seemed more concerned over the mail just then. He accepted his large packet from the clerk and then bowed to be excused while he read them. The others in the group, anxious, too, to read their letters, sat down in the reception room and were soon interested in reading home news.

Finally Polly looked up and exclaimed in a disappointed tone: "Oh, Dalky! Not one of our friends is coming to join us!"

The others looked up quickly at this news, and Mr. Dalken replied: "So I just read in Fabian's letter."

"Why!" exclaimed Eleanor, "that leaves only

a handful of us to start for Alaska, Dalky."

Mr. Dalken nodded again, and Mrs. Courtney began counting the number in their proposed party for the North.

"It will seem awfully queer to travel around without Ruth or Nancy or Jack," declared Eleanor, wistfully.

"If you prefer to add a few members to our circle I can suggest Algy and one or two other well-known society friends," suggested Mrs. Alex., eagerly.

"No, thank you," immediately replied Mr. Dalken. "As it happens, this news which causes our party to dwindle unexpectedly may prove to be very desirable in the end. I have learned that the most excellent yacht I had hoped to lease for the season has been taken and is already on its way for Hawaii. So we shall have to sit down and plan some new methods of reaching Alaska, or stay away."

Now the very idea of foregoing the great adventure which the girls had been talking of and anticipating so eagerly caused all to stop their concern over the defaulting of the Fabians and Ashbys, and to try to encourage Mr. Dalken to

continue his original plan to take them to the Land of the Midnight Sun.

"Well, then, sit down and let us study this map, which I secured downtown after I learned our private yacht was gone." Mr. Dalken unrolled the map and spread it out upon the table and the eager members in his party then gathered around to study the route he was about to outline with a pencil.

"I've heard from those who are competent judges that the Inside Passage ought to be the homeward route; because the coloring of autumn makes the scenery one grand picture impossible to describe. I also heard that September and early October are the most wonderful times in the North Country, despite the popular belief that it becomes too cold for comfort at that season of the year.

"After listening to a number of these opinions from men experienced in Alaskan weather and routes, I decided to sail across the Gulf and land at one of the Far-North ports. From there we can select one of several courses: go by rail to Fairbanks, or cross the Peninsula and sail to Nome, and there take a Yukon River boat and follow the river as far as it is navigable."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mrs. Alex. at this point in Mr. Dalken's outline, "is the river frozen over at certain points even in summer?" So she interpreted the word "navigable".

Her friends laughed, but Dodo quickly retorted: "Yes, Ma. And we shall have to slide over ice from one station to another, each one carrying her own baggage. That's why we dare not travel with trunks."

Before any one could reply to this foolish joking, and enlighten Mrs. Alex., she exclaimed eagerly: "Why, then, I'll wire for Algy to come to us at once. He'll be only too happy to carry my baggage."

"Algy remains wherever he is, Ma, because we'll freeze him out, if he dares to show up here, or up there!" declared Dodo.

"Before we think of portage or freezing up there or here we'd better try and find a way to travel to Alaska," remarked Mrs. Courtney laughingly, to settle the evident dispute between Mrs. Alex. and Dodo, which always threatened at the mention of A. A. A.'s name.

"I have started every possible line working for a craft which is or will be leaving port within the next week or so; and I now hope to save time by

having a general opinion on the subject of routes," explained Mr. Dalken. "If we cross the Gulf of Alaska and land at Seward, we can travel by rail to Fairbanks, as I mentioned before. From that city we can cross the famous gold fields and reach Fort Yukon. The boats stop there and take on passengers, and we can select any course we wish—east, west, or down to Juneau.

"Or we might find a vessel about to leave Seward for the trip to Nome. If we take that route we can travel all the way by the Yukon River, and end at Fairbanks; thence cross the coal fields and gold fields and come down to Wrangell and Juneau, and so on home.

"If we are fortunate enough to get a craft of our own we can go as we please and where we please. Then the question of route will be one we can decide on board. But we ought to be ready to say which destination we wish to make, in case we have to go by a route-vessel which goes to certain ports and then stops there."

Mrs. Courtney now spoke. "Since not one of us has ever been farther north than the 50 degrees on the globe, we know no more about routes or rivers than Algy does. And that is

not too much, you know. Therefore I propose that we leave the trip and the means, as well as the wheres and whys and whens, to you and your advisors."

"I'll second that proposition," declared Polly, instantly.

"Motion made and seconded, etc. And it is carried!" called Eleanor, standing and raising one hand above her head to denote that the question was settled off-hand. The others smiled and agreed with her.

Mr. Dalken then said: "It's all up to me, then, to find a means." And his friends laughingly declared that it was.

A telephone call interrupted the planning, and Mr. Dalken hurried away to answer it. During his short absence from the circle, the girls pored over the map and gazed with rapt anticipation at the alluring illustrations of Alaskan scenery and life. Then Mr. Dalken came back again with smiling countenance.

"That call was from one of the agents I told to get us a vessel. He says he just heard of a well-known captain who owns his own steamer. He makes summer runs for private parties, and visitors have spoken most highly of his ex-

perienced navigation and accommodations. I'm off now to meet the agent and question Captain Hall, the owner. I would appreciate having you all go with me, but I consider it wiser to let me go first, then escort you to-morrow morning, if I think the vessel seems suitable for us," Mr. Dalken explained hurriedly, then bid them a temporary farewell and went out.

Of course the girls began to talk and wonder how the quest might end, and Mrs. Courtney kept herself busy by answering all sorts of questions. Mr. Dalken was gone little more than an hour, and then he came in with a face hard to read.

"What news?" called Eleanor, instantly.

"You do not seem to be overjoyed, Dalky," remarked Polly.

"Well, I'm wondering what you ladies will say when you see the ugly duckling in the morning," was Mr. Dalken's calm reply. "I'm not enthused about the looks of the vessel or its luxuries, but I must say that the Captain and crew appear to be all that is desirable for an arctic voyage."

"Well, that is the all-important consideration, is it not?" asked Mrs. Courtney, readily under-

standing that the host felt dubious over the idea of taking a number of ladies on board a vessel so humble and innocent of beauty and luxury as this one must be.

"I saw better looking craft and one electric yacht with every electrical equipment, but the crews seemed rather undesirable. The owner of the electric yacht struck me as being one of the old-time sharks they used to have in the Klondike days, at the ports where all the innocent lambs came to be slaughtered. So I passed him up without a moment's hesitation. Now it remains for you-all to go with me early in the morning and have a look at the *Atlanta,* the name of Captain Hall's ugly duckling."

"When does he plan to sail?" questioned Polly, eagerly.

"That's another thing in his favor. He wished to sail to-morrow night, or at dawn of the next day. He has all his list made up—if we decide to take the passage to Seward with him," explained Mr. Dalken.

Mrs. Courtney now asked an important question. "Did you see any of the other passengers, or did the Captain speak of them?"

"Yes, and that's a third matter in his favor.

His list was complete and he had expected to set sail yesterday, but one of the parties changed their plans and went to Canada first, thence they expect to travel by rail to Alaska. That left enough vacancies to accommodate us. He has several other family circles on the list, all of them people of our station, I judge."

"I suppose he has a maid and valet on board for his passengers' requirements, since we dare not take our own?" asked Mrs. Alex. plaintively.

"He has a good Chinese cook and a kitchen boy; the crew, as I said before, looked to me to be sober, intelligent fellows," said Mr. Dalken, but he avoided any reference to a maid.

"We'll be up as early as you wish, Dalky, and go with you," promised Polly, eagerly. And her friends agreed with her.

Consequently the early morning found Mr. Dalken's party on the way to inspect the *Atlanta*. As Mr. Dalken had said, the vessel was no aspirant for beauty, but it looked like a sturdy little craft; and the Captain and his crew impressed every one as being better than the ordinary run of sailors on small vessels. The state-rooms were small but comfortable, and they

were arranged so that one small room could be opened for a private sitting room. This appealed to Mr. Dalken, and so it was decided to travel to Alaska on the *Atlanta.*

Captain Hall and Mr. Dalken settled their business matters, and the settlement must have pleased the owner immensely, for he was beaming with pleasure and relief, and the girls heard him say: "I will go and select the stores myself, and have the boys take them on board. The cook is capable of doing wonders, give him the ingredients."

By this token, Polly knew that Mr. Dalken had given the Captain the wherewithal to stock up the larder with goodies for the voyage. Mrs. Courtney exchanged looks with Polly and these looks signified that she suspected the same.

That night Mr. Dalken's party turned the usual sleeping hours into working time. Everything had to be packed and sent on board the *Atlanta* before noon, because Captain Hall wished to take full advantage of the favorable weather; besides, his other groups of passengers for the voyage were becoming restive at the delay that had been occasioned by the unexpected withdrawal of the most important unit of the

group for that cruise. Now that the Dalken party would fill in that gap in the group, all were eager to start away for adventures in the north.

The few hours stolen from sleep, in order to be ready for the departure at noon of the following day, meant little to the excited and eager girls in the Dalken party. Therefore they appeared at the early breakfast with bright and happy faces, and no one seeing them then would have said that they had lost any beauty sleep.

Shortly before noon Captain Hall declared that all his list of passengers were on board; and then the signal was given to the crew to cast off and set sail for unknown experiences.

The last glimpse of San Francisco our voyagers had was that of dazzling sunlight glinting from tapering points of tall buildings, or flashing back at watchers on the *Atlanta* from the numerous windows of sky-scrapers along the business streets of the city. Soon this was left behind as in a mist, and the girls felt that at last they were really off for their cruise to Alaska.

Now that she was actually in for the trip Mrs. Alex. began to complain. "I can't understand how I could have been so deluded into coming on

this fool's errand!" sighed she, regretful eyes watching the solid shores of California fading into a blurred distant horizon.

"Well, you certainly changed your mind often enough to be able to know what to do at last," was Dodo's unsympathetic reply.

"That's just it!" returned her mother. "Why didn't I leave you all to go where you wish, and let me go back to friends and society in Denver, or even in the East? I must have been hypnotized, that's all."

"Well, hypnotism isn't going to land you in Denver now!" laughed Dodo; then she got up and walked to the far end of the steam-yacht, which was certainly ploughing through the Pacific as though it meant to reach its destination in a few short hours' time.

CHAPTER III

FIGHTING ICE FLOES

THE *Atlanta* proved the adage "handsome is as handsome does" to be true. In regard to "does" the solid little steam-yacht was all hustle and go, for it demonstrated more speed with a minimum of cost and discomfort than many ocean liners Mr. Dalken had been on in the past.

Since leaving the pier in San Francisco Mrs. Alexander had changed her mind so many times regarding her presence on board *versus* her shining as a light in society in Denver or Newport, that the very idea of having to hear her express her personal opinions about the *Atlanta* and Alaska became a red rag in front of a bull to the girls. Mrs. Courtney had all she could do to keep them from being rude to the complainant; and Dodo did step over the line of self-control and retort impatiently to one of her mother's regrets.

"To hear you, Ma, one would think we dragged you into coming with us to bore the life out of every one in Alaska. For pity's sake, if not for your own sake, give us a little rest on the subject of *your* sacrifices, and allow us to seek rest for ourselves that we might prepare our own sacrifices."

Mrs. Courtney was not present at that time, and the girls felt that Dodo should not be reproved for speaking so plainly to the pessimistic and disgruntled woman who pined for fashion parades to satisfy her one ambition.

Mr. Dalken and Mrs. Courtney approached the group on deck at this time, and this saved the situation for the girls. Mr. Dalken appeared to be intensely pleased with his tour of inspection and Mrs. Courtney smiled with satisfaction. Thus the girls knew that their coming to Alaska with Captain Hall promised well.

"We could not have done better if we had been fortunate enough to have leased the electric yacht I craved to get," remarked Mr. Dalken, seating himself beside Mrs. Alexander. "This little vessel is really safer than that other one I admired so much; and Captain Hall is an experienced sailor of Alaskan waters. His crew,

too, is made up of picked men, and all we have to do now is to enjoy ourselves."

"To say nothing of enjoying Hop Lee's culinary arts," added Mrs. Courtney, smilingly.

"Oh, yes! I stopped to see Hop Lee, and believe me! he is tickled to bits over the added items of viands for him to practise on," laughed Mr. Dalken.

Mrs. Alexander sighed a relieved sigh, and said amiably: "I'm so glad I was urged to come and look after Dodo during this visit to Alaska. Now I feel that this voyage and the rest it gives me will greatly benefit my nerves."

Dodo smiled as she watched her mother settle back in the comfortable chair in pretended exhaustion; but the other girls made no sign that they had heard the lady's satisfied declaration about coming on this trip. Fortunately one of the young officers of the *Atlanta* now came up and said that Captain Hall wished them all to have luncheon under the awning on deck, in order to waive ceremony and become acquainted with their fellow passengers. This sounded very pleasant to the young girls, and off they started.

That impromptu luncheon was a splendid plan, and soon the Dalken party felt that they had

known their fellow-passengers a long, long time, since "time" is not really to be reckoned by the hours or days, but by experiences.

Captain Hall took extra pains in introducing the different units under his charge, and when he had done this he felt gratified at the result.

Thus the Dalken party learned that Mr. Tainter and his nephew Cornelius Tainter had come from London on a business matter; but they were able to combine pleasure with this business, hence this semi-private way of sailing to Alaska. From appearances it seemed that the Tainters were perfectly able to afford the luxury of any chosen method of traveling, though not a hint of their affluence in material possessions came from either of them. Mr. Tainter was a typical high-class Englishman, with a rather lean face and form and iron-gray hair. His eyes were deep hazel and seemed to see right through any pretence. Mr. Dalken liked him at once. Cornelius, known by the young people during the trip, by the shortened name of Corney, looked enough like his uncle to be a son instead of a nephew. He was about twenty-three years of age, and dark-haired, with eyes that expressed a

world of sentiment. Eleanor said later: "Sheik eyes."

After meeting the Tainters, the Dalken party were introduced to Mrs. Adair and her daughter Lois, a girl of seventeen. They had just come up to join the party, and were too late to be included in the general introduction to the Tainters, so now Captain Hall presented them.

In this way the girls and their chaperons discovered that Mrs. Adair came from Boston, where she had left a hard-working husband digging gold from his bank to pay for his wife's flutterings around the globe. Lois Adair reminded Polly of Elizabeth Dalken, in a way. Perhaps it was the superficial society education such girls have given them, from the time they begin to spoon for themselves in babyhood! Mrs. Adair made a splendid companion for Mrs. Alexander, and the two became inseparable from that time on. Lois acknowledged the introductions to the three girl friends with an air of being made to accept a disagreeable dose of medicine, and the girls had no difficulty or brain fag in placing her in her proper niche at once.

It was with a sigh of relief that the girls in Mr. Dalken's party turned to be introduced to

three fine, hale and hearty young college chaps, taking Alaska as a vacation outing. Captain Hall displayed a certain amount of pride in these students, as he mentioned their ambition to excel in their chosen profession of mining engineers. Redney Moore and Mallory O'Gowen were Irish in name and, perhaps in wit and freckles, but there it ended. Red, as he was called at once by the girls, was very blond and temperamental. Mal, also dubbed by this short name by the girls without delay, was brunette and serious, also quiet and thoughtful. Robert Graves, (his first name soon cut down to Bob,) was neither one or the other, but a welcome mixture of both his chums' dispositions. Thus it happened that Bob generally took the lead with his two pals.

The three students of mining engineering expressed in their admiring glances that they would not allow Polly and her two friends to languish for the boys that went south to seek fame and fortune. Rather did Mrs. Courtney fear that too much of this very intensive study of the forlorn and lonely hearts which her charges were expected to carry silently in their bosoms might prove troublesome for the boys. She quite forgot Corney Tainter and his quiet Sheik eyes, in

planning how to protect the students from college from singeing their wings at the flames they themselves might kindle. As it developed soon, however, Corney had to be reckoned with. Lois apparently was out of the order of this race between the girls and their admirers, but she was called into line whenever it became necessary to have a foil or a good substitute for one or another of the seven players in this game. Lois knew the rules of vamping by heart, but this was the first time she had to stand by and take her cue from others.

Delightful weather, lingering sunsets, and soft twilights that never faded into darkness, but cast a weird gray light over sea and vessel provided ample atmosphere for friendship to thrive on board the *Atlanta*. So engrossed were the girls with these new admirers that they actually forgot to keep track of Mr. Dalken's success in his suit for Mrs. Courtney. Hence it came as a shock, when they found Mr. Tainter, the Uncle, always at beck and call of Mrs. Courtney, and their own dear Dalky sulking alone in the Captain's rooms, or visiting Hop Lee for amusement.

The few days' sail between San Francisco and Seattle, where the *Atlanta* would stop for mail

and certain important papers which Mr. Tainter expected to find waiting for him there, were most enjoyable ones for all but Mr. Dalken.

The girls had discovered their host's unhappy state of heart and mind during the previous evening, and now they plotted together how to oust Mr. Tainter and reinstate Mr. Dalken. But this would necessarily shorten their own delightful hours of association with Corney and the College Trio, as they were called collectively. However, Polly declared that friendship came first, and duty called them to obey.

Before Mr. Tainter went on shore for his important papers from England and to send cables to his business associates in London, it had been settled between the two men passengers and the Captain that the *Atlanta* should cut away from the usual course from Seattle to Seward and cross the Gulf to Cape Resurrection by the short-course. Being the beginning of the open summer season, it was probable that icebergs would be met during the sail; but the short cut saved several days and would land the travelers in Seward a day ahead of the scheduled time for the train which met the Yukon Boat at its connecting points.

Captain Hall soon had the mail he sought for and then returned to his vessel to find Mr. Dalken in defiant possession of Mr. Tainter's personal steamer chair. Said chair was close beside Mrs. Courtney. The girls and their new beaux were near by, ready to take up arms in defense of their host, but it developed that their anxious offer of assistance was uncalled for.

Mr. Tainter was absent longer than he had asked for, and when he did come back it was quickly seen that he felt disturbed at certain information he had received while on shore. This he kept to himself, but he also managed to keep himself to himself, as well.

Captain Hall got under way again, then came out on deck and joined the passengers. "Well, thus far you have had a glimpse of Californian shore-lines on the one side and the great Pacific on the other; now, however, you will get nothing but water views until we sight Resurrection Bay, now renamed Harding Gateway, in honor of our late President's visit there.

"If you begin to notice the change in temperature you may be sure of finding an iceberg quietly stealing past us. Get out your glasses and search the horizon carefully and you will see a fine sight.

Quite often at this time of the early summer masses of ice break away from the far northern points and come down into the Gulf, carried by the swift currents which sweep around the Cape and the many straits near the Peninsula. Then, too, there are great ice floes which come crashing from the towering glaciers and are washed out into the Gulf by the rapid river waters. These are sights worth seeing, I assure you."

"How thrilling it will be, Captain, to make the acquaintance of an iceberg at close range," simpered Lois Adair, watching the serious eyes of Corney Tainter whom she had decided upon as a possible prey to her charms. As Polly said to Eleanor, "opposite always attracts opposite, and Corney is so serious and intelligent."

"I trust your craving for a close acquaintance with an iceberg will not be granted while we are on the yacht," laughed Red Moore.

"Why?" asked Mrs. Alexander, trying to draw attention to her natty new sailor suit. "I think it will be too sweet for anything to watch a great, white, ghostlike icicle floating across the water, dipping and bobbing to greet us, but as soft and fleecy-like as the clouds in the sky." As she concluded she turned her eyes upward to

direct the gaze of others to those same fleecy clouds.

Several of her audience had to laugh outright. Then Mal O'Gowen said in his usual blunt way: "The only thing about icebergs that might remind you of ghosts will be the chill they are sure to send ahead of them to warn you the spooks are near at hand."

Every one laughed, because Mal had provided a safety valve for their hardly repressed mirth at Mrs. Alexander's foolish talk. Then Polly said: "We can see those fleecy clouds above, but we'll have a hard time to see the fleecy ice below, because the greater part of an iceberg is submerged and only a small point of it rises above water-line."

"Oh, Captain Hall, is that true?" demanded Mrs. Adair, hoping to contradict Polly whom she detested for her intelligence and her superior looks and natural grace.

"Why, an iceberg floats on top of the water,—*every one* knows that much!" asserted Lois, seconding her mother's desire, as soon as she understood it.

"Wait until we meet one, then I shall have

better opportunities to explain them," said the Captain, then he turned away.

Mrs. Courtney tried to pour oil on troubled waters now, by explaining politely: "It is not always comfortable to stand and study an iceberg at close range. Generally it creates such an icy temperature that one is thankful to get indoors and crowd close to a radiator for warmth. Another drawback to a close-up study of a floe is the dazzling reflection which radiates from the ice above water. Sometimes this beautiful rainbow of colors seems to shine from hundreds of points at once, thus blinding your eyes to anything which might be under the surface of the water-line."

"This very aura of colors makes an iceberg the more dangerous to meet at close range," added Mr. Dalken. "One is so entranced in gazing at the upper section that one forgets what underlies that rainbow of radiation.

"Dear me! Let's change the subject, or I shall have nervous collapse," cried Mrs. Adair.

"I second that!" called Mrs. Alexander, pretending to shudder with dread. "I never dreamed of starting anything so unpleasant when I spoke of the ice floes."

"You need not fear, ladies," said Mr. Dalken.

"With such a good Captain and this staunch little vessel, I wager we could ride over a submerged floe and not feel the worse for it."

"Just as a flivver rides up over hummocks and hills and comes purring merrily out ahead of a big, heavy limousine," laughed Bob.

"Well, all the same, I wish the Captain had followed the usual route via the Inside Passage," complained Mrs. Alexander. "I know we would have been very comfortable then."

"You seem to think we could have reached Seward without crossing the gulf, Mrs. Alex.," said Mrs. Courtney.

"Of course, couldn't we? Why call it an Inside Passage, if it makes us go outside?" was the lady's frowning query.

It now became a mere matter of geography for Mrs. Alexander to grasp, and the younger members in the group fled at this ending to the conversation.

The *Atlanta* skirted the outside coast of Vancouver Island then sailed close to the west coast of Queen Charlotte Island; after this the vessel turned her back to Prince of Wales Island and Baranoff Island, in order to follow the northwesterly course mapped out for her by the three

men—the Captain and his two passengers.

Thus far the weather had been perfect. Not a drop of rain nor any unpleasant winds. With hearts as light and happy as can be the young folks were thoroughly enjoying the romance of the situation; even Mrs. Courtney felt that she craved a dearer friend and closer companion in her lonely life than platonic friendship had to offer her. Mr. Dalken sensed this change in her mood and usual self-restraint, and felt greatly elated that he was to have his dearest wish granted now.

That evening after all had gone to their rooms, he remained out on deck a few moments to have a cigar. Polly saw that he sent her a glance which meant something, and she managed to return and meet him for a moment.

"Polly, I just have to confide in some one and you are the one: I want to tell you that this Alaskan trip promises to bring me greater gold than ever was mined from the earth. You understand, I'm sure."

"Indeed I do, Dalky dear! And I congratulate you now on the success of something I have worked for and longed for ever since the day you two met in Mr. Ashby's shops!"

Captain Hall's appearance ended the confidence, and Polly sped back to her stateroom to share her news with Eleanor.

"Well, I'm glad to hear it!" sighed Eleanor, in relief. "I half feared that Tainter man would step in and make a lot more trouble for us, just as that rascal did down at the nitrate mines in South America. It's time Mrs. Courtney was bound for good or worse, just to put an end to her game of ducks and drakes with the susceptible hearts of elderly gentlemen such as Mr. Tainter and his ilk."

Polly laughed merrily. "Can you blame them, Nolla? Our chaperon is one in a million, and men do not meet one like that so often that they can pass her by without trying Cupid's arrows to reach her heart."

By the time the two chums had fully discussed Mrs. Courtney's alluring ways for middle-aged men they were ready for sleep.

The dawn brought a change in the weather, however, and this rough change seemed to change Mrs. Courtney's hitherto melting mood. She, too, became rather brusque and independent; and hopes for a speedy announcement of their en-

gagement, and the party which would be sure to follow, were lost again to the girls.

The squall which had seemed to be but temporary at first continued to become more menacing as the day advanced; finally Captain Hall ordered some of his crew to remove everything from deck and batten down the hatchways. In order to assist without delay in carrying out this order the Captain caught hold of a heavy ring in one end of the massive doors. At the same moment the vessel, which was now pitching and tossing tremendously because of the swirling waves which whipped every way at once, lurched dangerously and threw the experienced seaman off his balance. Instantly he brought his full weight in the opposite direction, but, unfortunately, the vessel careened suddenly also; the result was that the hand which gripped the iron ring was wrenched and the sound of a crack within the arm was heard by the Captain and his helper.

The excrutiating pain compelled the Captain to give expression to a groan and his face went deathly white; but he managed to get control of himself in time to grasp hold of the railing near by. The seaman dragged the cover down and

bolted it without more ado, then turned and insisted upon helping his superior to his cabin.

The Captain objected and declared that he must see to it that all was safe before the fury of the gale reached them, and the poor sailor wondered what he should do in such a dilemma: obey his Captain and let him suffer, or disobey and help him to recover?

An answer to his perplexity came in the form of Mr. Dalken. He hurried along by holding to the railing until he reached the two men. Then he saw that something unusual had happened to make the Captain's face so drawn and pallid.

"What is it, Captain?" demanded he, quickly. But the man could not open his lips to answer. He felt his head whirling and a sickening sensation rising in his throat.

Then the sailor explained that the Captain must have broken a bone since he, too, heard the snapping of something in the wrist of his commander just as he bent over to drag the cover over the doorway.

"Help me take him to his room," said Mr. Dalken, and the Captain resigned himself to the inevitable.

Having reached the cabin, the Captain told the seaman to send the first officer to him at once; then he turned and fell into a chair near the door.

Mr. Dalken had studied medicine and surgery for two years in his younger days, and now this understanding of bones proved to be valuable in the Captain's case. He examined the wrist carefully and reported to the questioning eyes of the patient: "Yes: you've fractured two small bones near the joint in the wrist; but we'll fix it all right in no time."

At this moment the first mate hurried in, his face expressing his concern. Mr. Dalken waited for the Captain to tell the officer what to do, then he added: "And send young Jenks here to assist me, officer; he knows something of surgery, I learned. He can help me attend to this fracture."

The first mate bowed and hurried away. Not long after his departure, the second mate, Jenks, ran into the room.

The two men, having a slight knowledge of anatomy, now set the bones carefully, but not without torturing the poor Captain, for they had to work slowly and their inexperience in surgery caused extra suffering to the brave patient. It

was finished at last, however, and then the Captain was made to lie down upon his couch and rest. Mr. Dalken turned to Jenks and nodded his head, and the young officer went out.

"I'm going to remain right here and see that you do not attempt to leave the couch," explained Mr. Dalken to the wondering Captain's expression. As he spoke he was mixing a drink for his patient to drink.

"What is it?" demanded the Captain. "Nothing to make me sleep, is it? I can't afford to lose myself at this crucial moment."

"Nothing more than a nerve quieter," assured Mr. Dalken.

The Captain swallowed it and began to relax. He remained quietly resting for half an hour, then he announced that he must get out and attend to his people's safety. Mr. Dalken offered no protest, because he knew that mental strain now would be more troublesome than pulse. But he got the Captain to promise him that he would not overtax his powers of endurance, nor use his hand in any way.

Captain Hall glanced at the sling and laughed. "Doesn't look as though I could, Doctor." Then both men smiled and shook hands. They went

out together and went directly to the salon to see how the passengers were feeling in the rough weather.

The gale did not subside during the day, and before sunset a fierce norther was blowing from Resurrection Point, the place, Captain Hall had informed his guests, where the blizzards and awful tornadoes are born and hurled over the Gulf to sweep a pathway clear across the United States, from northwest to southeast, until reaching the Gulf of Mexico, where they vanish.

The Captain appeared at dinner that evening as usual, but two or three of the men present knew he felt deeply concerned over the outlook of the weather. His manner was calm and cheery, nevertheless, and the other passengers thought of nothing worse than his wrist.

"It is a shame, Captain, to deprive us of a sight of one of Alaska's famous icebergs," commented Mrs. Adair, during the serving of dessert.

"The only ice I've seen is in my dinner glass," replied the Captain, shaking the glass to make the ice tinkle against the sides.

"How much more time will we have, Captain, in which to hope for a floe?" asked Lois.

"Well, I had sincerely hoped to be docked at

Seward this very night, but such gales as we've encountered all day long balks the best of seamen. Driving in the face of one of these northers is not speeding against the law," explained the Captain.

"It will blow itself out before morning, doubtless," was Eleanor's remark.

"You ought to know something about gales," laughed Polly, "hailing from the Windy City, you know."

"This is a different kind of a gale from those Chicago gets," declared the Captain. "This one may heap the snow and ice up on our decks before morning."

"O Captain!" chorused several voices, and all faces turned to question him.

"Yes, one can look for anything unexpected in this zone—from a nickel's worth of ice such as they deliver in New York City, to the North Pole itself. You must not feel surprised at finding yourself in your berth in the morning and greeting a Polar bear at close quarters," chuckled the Captain.

"But you do not really mean that!" gasped Mrs. Alexander.

"I mean that this gale heralds a norther such

as we seldom get at this season of the year up here. A norther brings sleet and ice upon its wings, and anything in the way of that storm, gets all that it can carry before the norther passes on its way southward."

"Well, we've wasted three days peering through field-glasses for a sight of a berg. If sleet and snow is all Alaska can show us for our trouble, I say she can keep it!" declared Dodo.

"There's a saying: 'Half a loaf is better than none,'" laughed Corney Tainter.

The dinner had ended now and Captain Hall said he would have to leave his agreeable company and see if the storm would bring half a loaf to young Tainter. Then he smiled and went away. Soon after his departure the rest of the group at the table left the dining salon also.

That night the cold became so intense that the younger set danced and ran races to keep warm. The older passengers sat huddled in fur coats and shivered. Hop Lee appeared just before the entire party agreed to go to bed and served hot chocolate.

No one lost time over cold cream jars and complexion massage that night; in fact, Polly and Eleanor were huddled under their blankets a few

minutes after closing their stateroom door; and Polly called from under the folds of the woolen cover, "Pity we did not come to bed sooner; at least it is warmer here."

"If we had I should have missed that delightful party with Mal O'Gowen," giggled Eleanor, from the berth above. "I think he is too funny for anything, Poll."

"So it seems," mumbled Polly, from under the huddled folds of the cover. "But I'd like to know what right you have to flirt so outrageously with him?"

"Why, now?" countered Eleanor. "We may meet an iceberg any moment you know, and that will freeze all idea of love."

"What has ice to do with your diamond ring?" asked Polly, lifting her face up to be able to speak more distinctly.

Eleanor laughed merrily. "I've heard folks call diamonds chunks of ice."

"Well, then, where do you keep your piece of ice these days? I haven't seen you wear poor Paul's ring since we came on this yacht." Polly tried to make her tone sound harsh and accusing.

"It's in my jewel bag, of course! Where would it be?"

"It should be upon your finger, so susceptible Mal could see that you are not for him," replied Polly.

"Oh prunes!" cried Eleanor, impatiently. "Don't be an old maid. Am I going to turn nun, because Old Paul is off in the wilds of South America making eyes at some dark-skinned señorita? Besides Mal has a sweetheart in Chi., too, and we talk about our best beaux when we are together."

"Oh, that's different then," responded Polly, trying to muffle her laughter at the way her chum took her rebuke. "It sounds most exemplary to hear that you only meet to discuss your beaux."

"I might ask *you,* Miss Polly Prunes, what right you have to lead two nice little lambs around by the nose as you are doing poor Red and Corney. My heart aches for them."

"Nolla, your heart aches only because you would like to get your own leading chain upon their noses," laughed Polly.

"Oh, Poll! I couldn't possibly find a place upon Red's snubby feature where I could hook a leader; as for Corney's beak, well, that doesn't need a leash, it is so convenient to hold as it is."

Both girls laughed aloud at these words, but

suddenly their mirth was choked by a shock and a frightful grating sound along the sides of the vessel. At the same time everything seemed to turn bottomside up, and the girls were actually rolled out of their bunks.

Bells were ringing, shouts were heard from officers, cries from adjoining cabins, and then the two girls had regained their balance enough to catch at their garments and hastily put them on. Polly saw with satisfaction that Eleanor quickly got her ring from the chamois bag and slipped it upon her finger, before she did aught else.

They were ready to rush from their room, when the door opened and Mrs. Courtney came in. "I just met the first mate and he asked me to notify my friends that the vessel struck a section of a submerged iceberg. The wind is so fierce and the sleet is so blinding that it was impossible to see anything farther than the rail on the sides of the yacht."

"Has any serious damage been done?" asked Polly, quickly.

"I do not know, but it would be wise to dress as warmly as possible and be ready for emergencies," replied Mrs. Courtney. "I'm going

THE SHOCK ROLLED POLLY AND ELEANOR OUT OF THEIR BUNKS.

back to my own cabin now, and put on all my midwinter clothing; then I'm going out to watch that ice floe."

"We'll be with you in a jiffy," promised Eleanor, turning to change from her flimsy evening dress to a heavy sport suit.

The girls wrapped themselves in heavy coats and ran to the salon where the others in their party were assembled. All were discussing the berg, but no one could see it, since the windows were continuously covered with sleet from without.

"But why these oil-lamps?" asked Eleanor, entering the room.

"Because the electric power went fluey," laughed Bob, as he turned to greet the newcomers.

"That's why our lights wouldn't turn on," added Polly, looking at Eleanor with an explanatory expression.

"No! do you mean it?" laughed Eleanor, and the other young folks joined in at Polly's expense. It was seldom she gave them a chance to chaff her in this way.

Mr. Dalken's appearance now, however, made them forget teasing and instantly they besieged

him to tell them what had happened to the steamer.

"I haven't inquired yet," returned the man. "I've been busy with the Captain's wrist; he must have wrenched it again by trying to help the boys with the work at the time the vessel rubbed noses with the ice."

All but Mrs. Courtney and Polly accepted this excuse, but these two astute friends of Mr. Dalken's understood that he was not telling *all* that he knew. Consequently, when the second mate came to the door and beckoned for him to come out, Polly ran over to Mrs. Courtney and whispered confidentially. In a few moments Mr. Dalken returned to the salon and made a casual remark about the iceberg "sticking around" as though it hoped to steal a little warmth from the engines of the yacht by doing so.

His friends laughed, but Polly and Mrs. Courtney exchanged knowing glances. Mr. Dalken intercepted these glances and quickly crossed the room to join the two who seemed to know something was wrong.

No one seemed to wonder at the strange rolling of the little craft, because they had been told the waves were like mountains of water

pitched and tossed up by the floe—all but Polly and her woman friend. Mr. Dalken now sought to divert them from their suspicions, by saying: "You will catch a glimpse of the berg soon, if you watch at one of the windows."

"Dalky don't try to steer us off the track of truth," scorned Polly, in a low voice, gazing right into the man's eyes.

His own wavered at that gaze of fearless understanding, and he turned to Mrs. Courtney instead. "Are you apprehensive of danger, too?"

"Neither Polly nor I have any apprehension of danger. I know something serious has happened to the *Atlanta,* but worrying about it will not remedy it. Keeping cool and observant may help some."

"There now, Dalky! You see we both are the kind to help you in an emergency, if you will but trust us," said Polly.

Troubled Mr. Dalken sighed in relief, as he glanced warily around to be sure no one could hear what he said, then he whispered: "The yacht collided with a monster floe as you have heard, but what you do not know is this: the nose of the craft entered a gaping crevice in this

ice and now is wedged in so firmly that it may need dynamite to free us. We must wait for morning, before we can decide upon any steps whatever."

"Good gracious!" breathed Mrs. Courtney, appalled at the information. Then she asked: "Meanwhile, are we drifting with the ice?"

"Exactly! And what is the worst luck of all is the way that ice-demon tricked us. A huge fragment of ice came crashing against the wheel and damaged it to such an extent that it is useless right now. As the vessel slid into the crevice between the two jagged sides of the floe, a sharp point of ice rammed the window of the Captain's room and did its utmost to demolish everything of importance in that room. This is what injured Captain Hall again—he tried to save his steering instruments from total destruction."

Both his hearers, in spite of their former protests of courage and fortitude, paled at the news and showed how concerned they really were. Then Polly rose above her fears and smiled.

"Dalky, trust those four boys and get them to help out in this emergency. They will be better off working with the crew than remaining here to discuss the situation. Meanwhile I shall try

to impart a little of our trouble to the others here, that we may be prepared should we have to act quickly. I'll not tell all you just told us, but only enough to let them feel calm in case you bring us added information of the fight with the floe."

"I don't know about the wisdom of that, Polly," remonstrated Mr. Dalken. "That Mrs. Adair and Dodo's mother will throw fits of hysterics the moment you suggest any danger."

Polly smiled. "Not when all the men are out of the room. That is exactly why they ought to be told quietly, and then try to get a grip on their nerves. Ask Mrs. C—— if I am right."

And Mrs. Courtney agreed with Polly that it would be best to prepare the others in the circle for what might possibly happen.

CHAPTER IV

ICEBOUND IN JUNE

As Polly left Mr. Dalken to rejoin her friends, she called to the young men laughingly and said: "Why don't you boys go with Dalky and find out where this zero weather comes from? If you find it is due to a first-class, warranted chip of the North Pole, coming up to be photographed, don't forget to run back and tell us. But don't sit around here absorbing all the heat from the chocolate, and making us wish you were in bed."

Polly gave Red a knowing look, and that bright young man had a hunch without parley. He got up, stretched lazily, to show he had leisure to burn, and then spoke to the other young men. "Come on, fellers; the ladies are tired of our company. Let's go see what Dalky and Tainter are up to. Like as not they are having some proverbial toddy in the Captain's sanctuary. Come on."

Mal and Bob jumped up ready to follow, but Corney seemed to hesitate. He sent Polly a look, then glanced at the other faces. Finally he seemed satisfied and without a word went out after the other men. When the girls and ladies were alone, they began wondering what could make the vessel pitch in such a sickening manner, but Mrs. Courtney explained saying: "Possibly we are getting the swells from that huge berg. That would interfere with our smooth sailing, you know."

"Yes, of course it would," agreed Polly, quickly—perhaps too quickly, because Eleanor gazed earnestly at both her friends.

"How do you know there is a floe so near?" asked she, suspiciously, of Polly.

"Goodness me, Nolla! I've been raised on blizzards and ice-slides at Pebbly Pit," Polly laughingly retorted. "I can actually *smell* ice if it comes near enough to menace me in any way. Now I can smell that floe, and I'm sure my olfactory nerves are not fibbing." The others laughed at her way of explaining herself, and the general laugh raised their spirits several degrees.

Mrs. Courtney now took up the thread of Polly's explanation and was explaining just how

the yacht might have collided with a floe and become frozen or wedged against it, when suddenly it felt as though the vessel had dropped through space. The sensation was something like that felt in one of the elevators of the Woolworth Building when it descends from the top floor and reaches the air valves too suddenly. Accompanying the uncanny sensation of dropping down with no bottom underneath, came deafening reports of cracking and crunching of ice. The roar of piling waters as they rushed past on both sides of the stout little vessel, caused every one in the salon to gasp with fear. No wonder! with such unknown dangers to face.

Mal O'Gowen now came headlong into the room. "Thank Heavens, we're free anyway!" cried he, waving his cap with joy.

"Did the old berg let go its clutches on us?" demanded Polly, eagerly.

"Most of it, but not all. Had it not been for Dalky and the Captain, we might now be swimming for shore in the Gulf," said Mal. "Mr. Tainter was all for waiting for dawn before planting a few sticks of dynamite, but the way we were perched upon one crag of ice that jutted out under the water-line, made the Captain fear

consequences should it melt away by the heat coming from our fires. Then it was hastily decided to try one or two sticks of dynamite to see if we could let the *Atlanta* down easy. We did this after great risk, and that is what you felt a few minutes ago—the ledge of ice which held up one side of the yacht was blown to bits, and now the little vessel is right side up once more, without danger of being turned turtle with a sudden break of the ice.

Mal was beset by anxious questioners, and he tried to explain to each one, without telling too much about the situation. As he spoke warily Eleanor watched and then turned to surprise Polly and Mrs. Courtney with her expression.

"I suppose you think I believe all that Mal is saying?" said she, with a wise look in her eyes.

"Why not?" countered Polly. "Mal seems to have first news of the experiment."

"Well, then, why not go to bed again? No need waiting up all night, since danger is over," said Eleanor.

"I want to wait up and try to see the berg as soon as we get away from it," said Polly.

"Yes—as soon as we get away. That may be a long time," retorted Eleanor.

"I suppose all this churning and tossing is made by the waves, and not by the drifting iceberg as you seem to think," was Mrs. Courtney's remark.

Mal turned to her and nodded. "Yes, that's it. It may be a full hour before we can reach calmer waters again. By that time the gale must have spent its fury, Jenks and Allen say." Since Jenks and Allen were the two mates on board the *Atlanta,* they ought to know.

Mal advised them all to stand near the port-holes if they wished to see the floe when it was left behind; and those of the group in the salon, easily convinced, did as the young man said. But Polly, Eleanor and Mrs. Courtney remained seated in their armchairs. Dodo had gone with her mother to one of the port-holes and then, finding Mrs. Adair just back of them, turned and gave her own place to the lady.

Dodo saw the two watching from the window for the sight they were eager to see, and then she turned and hurried over to her friends, where Mal was confiding something he had not mentioned before.

"So the gale carried us far out of the charted course, and the tremendous suction of the ice

floe held us too close to its sides for comfort or safety's sake. If the craft can hold tight to the sides of the ice until after the gale is spent, we will try to clear it and find better sailing. But we all agree to hug it now, and sue for divorce later." Mal's words brought a smile to Mrs. Courtney's lips, and the girls felt more at ease.

"I think I'll run out again and see if there is any new development. I'll be back shortly and report again," said Mal. So he left the room and those in it for the time being.

"Old Neptune sure does batter us without regard," sighed Polly, after a continued swishing and swashing of waves against the yacht.

"The ice and sleet doesn't seem to let up either," added Eleanor. "I thought an hour's time would end it all."

"No one can say how long the storm will last. It is only conjecture on Mal's part," remarked Dodo.

Half an hour passed before any further news was brought the anxious watchers in the salon. Then Mr. Dalken came in.

"Well, girls, I suppose you heard all about our dynamite, eh?" asked he, cheerily. His man-

ner conveyed confidence and every one felt sure the danger was past.

"But we heard no details, Dalky," quickly said Eleanor.

"No! well, Mal must be a poor story-teller. But I'll tell you about it. That mate Jenks is a daring rascal, all right, because it needed some one to cross over to the ice and plant that stick of dynamite where it would do the work for us. And Jenks insisted upon doing it. We fastened a rope under his arms to pull him up in case he slipped in the water, and then he managed to get off from the yacht and land upon the peak of ice that projected over near our side. He had clamped ice-creepers to the soles of his boots, and slowly he crept along the icy ledge until he found the place to drive the stick. He lighted the fuse and then hurried back. We got him on deck before the explosion took place. But you know what was the result of that well-placed dynamite. That Jenks is a *man* though, that I'd like to have sent to South America with the boys!" said Mr. Dalken.

"Better thank goodness he was with us up here!" exclaimed Polly.

"Well, girls, seeing you are so cheerful and

feeling happy, I'll go and see what the other men are doing," said Mr. Dalken, starting for the door.

"I don't suppose it would be of any use to send out the SOS signals for help?" suggested Mrs. Courtney just as Mr. Dalken opened the door to leave.

"No, because we are in Alaskan waters, and vessels are few and far between in this gulf. Besides we took chances and went out of the common course to reach Seward a few days sooner than the ordinary route would take. Now we are off the beat entirely, and must wait for milder weather before trying to locate our latitude and longitude again." With this explanation he was gone.

Back with the officers and the crew Mr. Dalken learned that the settling of the *Atlanta* forcibly from the cleft ledge of ice into a more balanced position between the ice-banks had caused a spear of ice to enter between the plates which protected her keel. The stoker had seen water slowly coming into the coal bunkers and had reported it to the engineers immediately. After instant examination it was found that the leak came from back of the great quantity

of coal under the water-line of the yacht.

Mr. Dalken heard Allen order the coal to be moved, and the ship's carpenter to try to repair the damage done, from the *inside* of the craft, if possible.

"The boys and we two men will do that shoveling, because the crew is needed elsewhere, Allen," said Mr. Dalken.

"Better have Mr. Tainter remain with the Captain," suggested Jenks. "He might wake from that opiate we administered, and no one knows what he might do in a semi-conscious state."

"That's right, Dalken. I'll take turns with you in watching the Captain, but you take first watch," agreed Mr. Tainter.

"No, you first, friend. I can shovel coal as well as you, but I'll agree to give you your turn very soon." Thus saying, Mr. Dalken hurried away.

Mr. Tainter went to take his place beside the drugged Captain's side, and the others followed Jenks to the coal-bunkers. On the way down, the officer told Mr. Dalken that the wireless apparatus was out of commission, and all hope of sending out a call was frustrated until the wires could be repaired again.

"The Captain told me it would be useless to do so now, anyway," remarked Mr. Dalken.

"Yes, he said that, but he did not want any one to know why we were not using the wireless. He knew this before he was given the morphine, and it helped to run his temperature up."

The amateur coal-heavers finally moved all the coal from the vicinity of the leak, and then several of the crew got to work to bale out the water and give the carpenter a chance to reach the damaged side. A semicircle of anxious men stood outside the bunks and waited for reports of the leak. They had not long to wait.

Allen ran out and reported to his fellow officer. "That rip in the side of the vessel can never be repaired from inside. We can stop the inrush of water for a time by driving in wedges, but it will be necessary to station a man right there to keep watch of the wedges. The water is bound to force them out again and again, and we must drive them back each time. Also we must have men to bale out the water that is bound to get in, or the vessel will fill so rapidly that the fires will be killed."

Therefore Mal and a sailor were stationed at the dark end of the bunk where they watched the

wedge and calking which the men had used to stop the leak partially; and Corney and Bob and Red were told off to bale out the water and try to keep it baled as much as possible.

Allen and Jenks then went with their men to attend to other necessary work, leaving Mr. Dalken to go to relieve Mr. Tainter.

Thus the night passed and morning broke, but conditions regarding the yacht remained much the same. Not so with the passengers, however. Mrs. Alexander had been complaining for the last hour, and had blamed all but herself for the plight she was in on board the *Atlanta*.

Hop Lee served an early breakfast in the salon, bringing word at the same time that the men would eat theirs whenever they got off their given duties. The ladies were not to wait for them.

"But what duties can they have, when there are paid seamen to do the work?" demanded Mrs. Alexander.

Hop Lee shook his pigtailed head and grinned at the peeved lady. Then the girls tried to get Hop Lee to tell them what had happened and where were the boys. But the Chinaman shook

his head and repeated the memorized reply: "Me no no! Me no no!"

The hot fragrant coffee reacted upon the jaded nerves and soon the ladies and girls felt better. Hop Lee had remained to wait upon the guests, and now he grinned at seeing how much better they felt.

"Hop Lee plenly fine dokker, eh? Me mek medsin fine, eh?" chuckled he, pouring a second cup of coffee for all those present.

While the second cup of coffee was being sipped by each one in the waiting and watching circle in the salon, Corney Tainter came in. He smiled at seeing Hop Lee serving breakfast, and said: "I'll take a cup myself, Hop. Nothing like it after working down in the coal."

"What have you been doing down there, Corney?" asked Polly.

"Oh, shoveling coal for a prize," laughed Corney. "We had to move tons and tons of coal, you see, and all hands had to fall in." The young man took a gulp of hot coffee, then resumed.

"I never dreamed Uncle and Mr. Dalken could be such old sea-salts as they have proved these past few hours. Looking at their lily-white hands and manicured nails you'd never say they

could dig into work as they have done. Some salts, I tell you!"

Corney's expressive manner of describing the "salts" made his audience laugh; and the laughter made them feel better. Nothing like laughter to drive away gloom, thought Corney.

"Apparently all danger for us is past, eh, Corney?" asked Mrs. Adair, anxiously.

"I'm not a seaman, but I should say we have smooth sailing from now on," replied Corney, evasively.

"Then we may as well retire to our rooms and get some needed sleep," suggested Mrs. Alexander.

But Mrs. Courtney and the girls said they preferred to remain in the salon until the men returned with fuller reports on the condition.

At this point in the planning a sailor came to the door and called Corney to come out and go to Mate Jenks at once. The faces of those left in the salon now expressed new fears again.

"I'm going to see what is wrong," declared Polly, also starting for the door.

"If you go, I'm going!" exclaimed Eleanor positively.

"Girls, I think you should remain here. If we

were wanted or needed by Dalky he certainly would come and tell us so," announced Mrs. Courtney emphatically.

"But why wait here and eat our souls out in suspense? I'm no infant to be kept in the dark like this!" cried Polly, impatiently.

"We know that, and yet there are times when a woman can do more good by remaining where she is, than by doing those things which mere man can do for her. Right here is where you are needed now. Can't you grasp the situation?" said Mrs. Courtney, anxiously.

Further argument was interrupted by a shock which jarred every one from his seat, and made the timbers of the vessel creak and crack. Instantly following this came the strange sensation of being forced backwards by some unseen power. Then another shock and grinding, crunching, splitting and cracking of the yacht.

Mrs. Alexander fell upon the floor in a dead faint. Mrs. Adair and Lois cried and wailed that they were about to die, and it needed all the self-control of Mrs. Courtney and the girls to keep from running from the room to see for themselves what had occurred.

It was well that Mr. Dalken ran in at this

moment. "Listen, all!" shouted he, with uplifted hand to demand quiet from the Adairs. "The ice floe, still hugging our craft between her two severed sides, ran aground upon some island. There it seems wedged and holds us frozen to her cleft edge for a short time. There is nothing to fear, if you keep calm and wait. Waiting is all we can do right now."

"Wait for what?" demanded Dodo, anxiously scanning the speaker's face for deeper facts.

"For the ice to thaw when this blizzard is over. Then we shall be free to sail away from the old demon," explained Mr. Dalken.

"Doesn't the Captain know the island where we are caught with the berg?" asked Eleanor.

"The Captain has not yet come out of the sleep we forced upon him when he was suffering so intensively; and the officers say the vessel has been carried so far from her course by the swiftly floating crag of ice that they cannot tell just where we are. You must remember that it is difficult to take our bearings with damaged instruments and the steering gear smashed to bits. Thank your Heavenly Father that we were not sunk by that floe when we struck!"

Mr. Dalken turned at these words and ran

away as suddenly as he had appeared. Upon the slamming of the door at his heels, Mrs. Alexander began to moan and sigh heavily, and finally she opened her eyes. Then the cries and groans she voiced drove the others who heard her almost to distraction. Dodo tried to stifle her loud wails, but to no effect.

Mrs. Courtney and Polly endeavored to raise her up to her feet, and then it was discovered that she had wrenched her ankle in falling upon it when she swooned.

"My goodness! Another invalid to care for," cried Eleanor.

"Polly, run to the steward and ask for something to bathe the ankle and see if there is any bandage on hand," ordered Mrs. Courtney, after tearing away the silk stocking and seeing how the joint was swelling.

"I suppose I shall find bandages in the Captain's cabin, where they used it for his wrist," suggested Polly, turning to look at Mrs. Courtney. That lady nodded and Polly was off.

She returned with both the bandages and arnica, and then she shared the news she had heard while in the Captain's room.

"I heard Allen conferring with Dalky and Mr.

Tainter in the Captain's Cabin, and they seemed to think that Jenks and two seamen who have gone across the floe to investigate for us upon the island, will return with good news of a near by village. If this is the case, we are to take our most valuable items and go ashore to wait for the vessel to thaw loose from the reef of ice."

"Why, this is awful!" cried Mrs. Adair. "Cross that berg and leave the comfortable ship for a life with Esquimaux?"

"It might be better than sinking under the berg," was Polly's cryptic answer.

CHAPTER V

MAROONED, BUT WHERE?

HALF an hour later the boys returned to the salon, and Mate Allen came with them. He acted as spokesman.

"I'm going to tell you just what the situation is, and then you will understand that we have to use quick action," said he. "Jenks and two other men went ashore to scout for us and find out if we could cross the ice to the island. I find you have been told why, so I will not lose time repeating that much.

"Jenks reports that the crossing to land is quite simple and safe, and he advises that we leave the yacht at once. So now, ladies, gather together the fewest possible items—or I mean, make the lightest and smallest bundles you can of such things which you need most—and dress in the warmest clothing you have with you. You will be thankful to have heavy shoes or arctics,

and woolen stockings when we leave the vessel. Wool, wool—is what you need for the time being. No one is going to comment on style or appearances, but comfort and ease will win a prize right now."

Allen looked at the Adairs and Mrs. Alexander as he gave these last advices; but they seemed not to notice his personal references to them, for they were bewailing fate which had made these horrible experiences necessary.

"Where are we going, officer? and when do we leave?" were Mrs. Courtney's questions.

"Jenks believes there is a fishing village on the other side of this island, but we shall have to chance finding it. The men that went ashore stopped long enough only to make sure the island was habitable and that we could make the crossing without danger. If the ice-reef melts away from the yacht we can quickly return to our craft. But we may be grateful that we are on shore, should matters develop differently from that which we hope for," explained Allen.

"Are we abandoning the yacht without the Captain's knowledge?" asked Polly, anxiously.

"Oh, no, Miss Polly," answered Allen. "The Captain became wholly conscious during the ab-

sence of Jenks and the sailors; Mr. Dalken explained just what the conditions are, and he agreed to the plan to land for a time upon this island."

"Well, I can't see the sense of it," declared Eleanor. "If the ice melts and frees the vessel, we ought to be on board to watch and guide it safely. How can we get back on board if the reef of ice thaws away and leaves us on land, while you seamen are on board?"

Allen seemed confused, and Mrs. Courtney understood that there was a far more serious state of affairs, which the mate was not disclosing. She thought deeply for a moment, then turned to Polly, who had helped her to bandage the ankle of Mrs. Alexander.

"Polly, I need more arnica. It will be necessary that we take as much with us as you can find. Come over here and let me write down just what you must get from Dalky—and at once."

Hastily scribbling something upon a page torn from a book Mrs. Courtney gave it to Polly and urged her to hurry to the Captain's cabin. Outside the door Polly read what had been written.

"Demand of Dalky just what situation is. We

must know all if we are to act intelligently."

This note brought Mr. Dalken himself to the salon. Allen saw that the man proposed telling more than he had been authorized to divulge, and he now bowed and hurried away to his duties.

Mr. Dalken smiled encouragingly and remarked: "Well, we seem to be on the verge of an adventure for which we had not planned. We sent Jenks out to make careful observations regarding the position of our vessel and the island upon which the ice floe ran, and he came back with rather unpleasant news.

"He found the *Atlanta* still wedged in tightly in the ice crevice, but our dynamite had broken loose such large slabs of ice on the one side that they would endanger our craft, should that side thaw and crash down. They would capsize our yacht and turn her over—see? To save ourselves from added worry and accidents, he says we would be far safer on shore for a time. The moment the ice breaks away, as it is sure to do, as soon as this blizzard blows over and the sun shines again, we can return to the vessel and continue on our way to Seward."

"Are we leaving the yacht without more

definite understanding of the island than this meager report?" asked Eleanor.

"Jenks left his two seamen to continue on across the high ridge they had reached, to prepare for us at the Esquimaux village which will be located upon the side where the Japan Current washes and creates such a pleasant climate. He came back to help us to leave the ship at once," explained Mr. Dalken.

"But, Dalky, how can we carry the invalids across from the yacht to the island, in such a gale as you say is blowing?" was Polly's anxious question.

"Leave that work to the officers. They have it planned and we shall take no risks unnecessarily," was the answer.

"When shall we start, Mr. Dalken?" asked Mrs. Courtney.

"We want you to be all ready to leave at a moment's call. It is agreed not to abandon the yacht until it seems absolutely necessary for our further safety. The men that were not needed to bale water and keep the craft right-side up are moving as much of the yacht's food stores and bedding to the side from which we shall

have to climb off as we think we shall be able to carry. Then it will not take long for us all to move it from the deck to the island."

As the day advanced it was noticed that the gale gradually subsided. And with the passing of the norther the waves also calmed down, but the tide still ran very high and kept the vessel careening uncertainly upon her icy perch between the sides of the cracked floe.

Before everything was ready for the passengers and crew to meet at the side where the stores had been piled for easy removal to the shore, the storm had practically blown itself away, and the sleet and high wind had gone with it across the Gulf to strike the States.

"Perhaps we might remain on board after all," ventured Polly, hopefully, when she found the deck quite safe to walk upon.

"Hardly now," returned Mr. Tainter, who had charge of the girls and ladies, while Mr. Dalken was looking after the Captain.

"But why?" insisted Eleanor. "The ice may thaw gradually, and release us without added danger or accident."

Then Mr. Tainter pointed to the crevice where the *Atlanta* had been wedged since she struck the

ice. "See that rough ridge up there, almost opposite our handrail?" He pointed to a deep rut in the gleaming ice.

"Well, that is where our keel was frozen in when we first got wedged. See how far down we have slid since then? What we fear is this: the moment warmth strikes this berg and causes it to soften, our yacht will drop between the jagged sides of the ice and be crushed as you might crush an eggshell in your hand. See?"

Yes, they all saw! and no more was heard about deferring the departure from the yacht.

Even before the human freight began to leave the vessel, it was reported that the ice had thawed enough to drop the *Atlanta* several inches lower than she was when the last observations were made. This hastened matters and every one felt glad that it would not be necessary to postpone the abandonment.

The Captain had been rolled in blankets and placed upon a hammock which acted as a litter; and Mrs. Alexander was half-carried between two husky sailors to keep her weight from coming down on her injured ankle. Then, led by officer Jenks and Mr. Dalken, the ladies and girls

were helped from the side of the yacht and, after much slipping and gasping and frights, reached the steep barren bank of the island.

Mr. Dalken now insisted upon their following him up the rough frozen ground of the cliff to the ridge which Jenks had climbed upon his first visit. Here they expected to see the two seamen returning to bring them reports from the village. There was no doubt at all that such a village would be located somewhere on that island!

With the passengers safely on land, the crew and the boys began to carry off such stores as they felt they could manage.

The first division of the castaways had reached the top of the ridge whence they could look back over the way they had climbed thus far; and from which they had expected to get a wide view of the island and find the scouts coming to meet them with good news; but they found a discouraging condition confronting them up there: Just ahead stretched a gaping chasm which cleft the entire island and reached along the ridge from an inlet of sea at the right, to a great swamp of sea growth at the left. This gulch must be crossed before the refugees could go on farther.

"We'd better wait here and rest, and consult with the boys," suggested Mr. Dalken, turning to watch the boys struggle up the rough slippery cliffside toward them. Each one was burdened with stores and necessary items, and their progress seemed slow.

Finally the seamen reached the group waiting at the ridge and placed their freight upon the ground. In answer to Mr. Tainter's question, one of them replied: "We are going back for more. We were told to ask you to divide these so that each young lady would carry her blanket and certain food-and-water supplies. Mr. Dalken and Mr. Tainter will have to take charge of the Captain, and Mrs. Courtney and Mrs. Adair help the injured lady. We men will do the rest."

Having delivered the message, the men turned and went back to their friends to load up again with fresh burdens. Left up on the ridge, the girls and the men consulted as to means of crossing the gulch.

"We shall have to get a rope over in some way, and work it as you would a pulley," said Polly, remembering former experiences in which she had figured at Pebbly Pit.

"How get it over, though?" asked Eleanor, anxiously.

"You might lower me down this sheer side of the chasm, and I could climb up the other side and there secure the end of the rope to a stump or rock," suggested Polly, gazing down the almost perpendicular wall of the ravine.

"You will do nothing of the sort!" declared Mr. Dalken, positively. "We will wait for Jenks and Allen to join us; then we will see."

So they waited, and after what seemed to be an interminable wait, Jenks and some of the men climbed up to the ridge with their packs. The question of crossing the ravine was taken up and Jenks quickly settled it by deciding to cross it himself.

A coil of rope was tied to his back, and he was secured in a noose under his arms. Then he was slowly lowered down the jagged side of the chasm. They knew when he had touched the bottom by the slacking of the rope. Then they saw him cross the torrent in the bottom of the gulch, and finally begin his perilous climb up the opposite wall of the cleft. They held their breath as he took hold of every offered security—roots, ledges, bushes—and at last they heaved a

tremendous sigh of thanksgiving when he rolled over upon the edge of the top.

He stood up and waved a hand, then began to secure the rope to a stout little tree which was dwarfed and gnarled and had been broken in the gale which swept this exposed bit of land. This done he tied the end of the rope to a weight and flung it across the ravine. It fell near the waiting group, and then Mr. Dalken took it and tied it fast to the other end, thus forming a pulley across the cleft in the ground.

"We shall have to swing you girls and the patients across in a blanket, I suppose," said Mr. Tainter, thoughtfully.

"Better start some of my crew over first, to help Jenks over there. It will be no easy matter, working the rope without a pulley," said Captain Hall, from his canvas litter.

At this moment Mal O'Gowen and Bob Graves came puffing up the ascent laden well with such things as Mate Allen had tied upon their backs. They heard what the Captain said, and Mal made a suggestion.

"I'll run back and tell Allen, and he can send a man to the yacht to bring away a few pulleys. We may need them later."

"And I'll run back with you, Mal, and carry up more stuff," said Bob.

The Captain approved then added: "See that we have guns and ammunition, too!" And the two boys raced down the steep cliffside and soon reached Allen and his seamen.

It was not plainly visible to those waiting up on the ridge just what took place after the boys returned to the officer and his men who were working on the ice-reef to convey the stores from vessel to land. Soon they saw certain members of the crew climbing up the ascent with heavy packs upon their backs; and then they could distinguish the small moving figures crawling over the ice and finally reaching the yacht's deck. Then these disappeared and they knew some of the men had returned to the vessel for the pulleys and firearms.

The seamen of the crew that were coming up with their packs at the time the specks of human beings had gone on board for the pulleys, now dropped their burdens beside the other stores up on the ridge. One of the men, a foreigner, with no understanding of English, saw, nevertheless, the problem of crossing the ravine. He jabbered something in Finnish to the Captain,

then pulled a bulky object from his pocket. It proved to be a pulley!

At the cries of relief from every one there, the Finn chuckled and began tugging at a mass of stuff which choked his other pocket. Then this mass came out with a violent yank and there upon the ground fell another smaller pulley and fishing tackle.

A whoop of delight came from those who had forgotten that fish might be necessary for food during their temporary stay on the island; but the most welcome sight was the second pulley. Now there need be no delay in crossing the chasm, and the men started to work at once to attach a pulley to this end of the rope.

Jenks managed to draw over the other pulley to his side of the chasm, and then began the testing of the bridge which was to carry every one across the cleft. Two seamen were sent over first, and the bridge was pronounced quite safe and secure for the others to use.

"But it seems so silly to cross over and then have to come back again as soon as the yacht is free from the ice," complained Mrs. Adair.

"Why not camp right here, Mr. Dalken, and then we can watch the yacht and be ready to go

on board as soon as the floe gets away," added Lois.

"Since we are all safely off, we will confess, ladies," said the Captain seriously. "The *Atlanta* is so badly damaged that it needs thorough repairing before we can float her again. It was the wedging upon the ice that kept her from sinking before, but now that a thaw is inevitable, and the little craft is down in her water-bed again, it will fill up quickly and sink. Now you understand why we removed everything possible from the vessel."

This information silenced all with its dire consequences. Mrs. Alexander wailed loudly: "Oh, why did I ever let you people insist upon my coming with you? I could have been safe and happy in Denver!" But no one answered her question. They had too much food for thought to attend to her selfish ramblings.

"Come, come, friends!" called the Captain cheerily. "If I accept such a loss, as well as my physical condition, without a frown, why would you feel so blue about it. Just think how much more hazardous it might have been, and then thank heavens we have an island, plenty of food, and other necessities right here."

"The Captain's right! So let's follow his example and brace up!" called Polly, waving her hand and starting for the rope to signify that she was going to cross to the other side.

Mr. Dalken saw that this crossing would compel every one to concentrate upon the act, and their minds would not be filled with the sense of losing the *Atlanta*. So he seconded Polly's proposition.

They managed to secure her with a loop of rope and then all held their breaths while she was pulleyed across the deep chasm. Reaching the other side she stood up and laughed, then called back: " 'Come on in, fellers, the water's fine!' "

Her very optimism lifted the gloom from the others and the slow work of pulleying the women and girls across the ravine began. At last the Captain had to be tied up in the canvas and swung across; and then came Mrs. Alexander's turn. She rebelled and cried out in dread, until Mr. Tainter lost all control of himself and said scornfully: "Then remain here and enjoy your own company!"

With this, the Englishman placed the loop about himself and called to be hauled over. Mr. Dalken had to smile as he began to pulley his

friend across to the other side, because he understood how impatient a bachelor would feel with such a woman.

Finally Mrs. Alexander realized that she must cross or follow the Englishman's advice and remain alone upon the ridge. She turned to see if the boys and the rest of the crew were coming up the cliff, and then she screamed and screamed hysterically. Only Mr. Dalken could see what had caused her wild cries, because the chasm was lower than the top of the ridge, and those now standing upon the other side of it had no way of seeing over the top where the two were standing. All they could see was Mrs. Alexander's collapse upon the ground, and Mr. Dalken's hands clench. Then he ran away and disappeared.

"Ma, Ma! get up and tell us what has happened!" called Dodo, wildly, as she saw her mother remain crumpled upon the ground.

"I'll climb back there and see what is wrong," offered Jenks, quickly acting upon his own suggestion.

"Go hand over hand along the rope, Jenks, but do not lose your grip, man! We need every one of us now," begged Mr. Tainter, as he placed

a loop around Jenks' waist for extra safety's sake.

Jenks soon reached the side of the unconscious woman, but he paid little heed to her. What he saw down below filled his mind to the exclusion of all else.

"What is it? Tell us Jenks, for the love of heaven!" shouted the Captain, trying to get out of the winding blankets.

Jenks turned and making a megaphone of his hands shouted: "The *Atlanta!* She's broken away with a larger section of ice, and is fast going out to sea!"

Those straining their ears to hear what he said sighed in relief; and the Captain began to cough and choke, as he tried manfully to keep down the sobs at hearing how his sturdy little craft was lost to him forever!

"Captain, dear," began Polly, placing a hand upon his head, "we have much to be thankful for, as you just said. Every one is safe on land, and just see all the stores and supplies we have here to keep us until we are taken to Seward. Why, Captain, even the pulleys were given us when we needed them. Can you weep, then?"

Captain Hall placed a hand over that of the

sympathetic girl's and tried to smile through his tears. Finally he managed to "clap down the hatchways"—as he would have said it—upon his grief and then took command of the waifs.

"Are the boys almost up the cliffside, Jenks?" called Captain Hall across the gulch.

"No, Captain. They seem to be standing at the verge of the crag and signaling and calling to—oh, God!" then Jenks almost fell back into the chasm.

"What! What now? Tell me, for the love of heaven, man!" shrilled the poor Captain.

Jenks turned, and those waiting with the Captain saw his white face drawn into lines of agony. He tried to explain, but his voice refused to utter a sound. Finally he did manage to call out: "There are some boys on board the little yacht, Captain. They stand at the rail and are trying to save themselves."

"But the vessel, the *Atlanta,* Jenks! Is she all right?—if so, the boys can quickly get away in one of her lifeboats," cried Captain Hall.

His call was not heard, however, for Jenks now ran and disappeared from view also. Mrs. Alexander began to revive and sat up. She

rubbed her eyes, stared around, and began to scream again.

"Maw!" shouted Dodo, across the chasm, using the term so long forgotten by her and her friends, "stop that useless bawling and help us, can't you? Stand up and tell us what you see down at the foot of the cliff."

"Oh, Dodo," wailed the hysterical woman. "It's awful; I just remembered that I left all my money and jewels upon the bed in my room. Oh, oh! And now the yacht is sailing away with my precious things, and some of those rough seamen on board with no one to watch them help themselves. Oh, oh!" and she crumpled up again and wailed loudly.

It did not seem possible that a human being could think of money or jewels in such a dire case, yet there crouched a woman who thought naught of the human lives sacrificed that extra stores might be added to those already removed from the doomed vessel, but wailed only over her gewgaws of personal adornment!

Mrs. Alexander's failure to describe what was taking place at the spot where the ice-reef had broken away and forced the yacht away with it, urged Polly to cross the rope again and climb

up to the ridge where the woman rocked back and forth in her grief over her lost jewels.

Polly now began to report to those anxious ones upon the other side of the chasm, and she continued to describe all she could understand until finally she saw the group of men start up the cliff side with their freight. The ice floe and the staunch little yacht had passed from her sight, around the projecting arm of the island.

The climbers came ever nearer and Polly tried anxiously to see which of the sailors had gone back to the vessel and had been carried away so unexpectedly. Then she stiffened and stared hard again. Then she turned and gazed over at her friends grouped at the edge of the ravine waiting for her to speak. Once more her eyes silently counted the climbing men, and then she gave a cry of agony.

"What is it? Polly, tell us the truth!" came from her troubled friends back of her.

With sinking heart they saw the girl turn and look at them. Then she moved her lips silently for a time, before she could articulate: "Mal and Bob are not with the others." It was enough.

Mr. Dalken preceded the silent cortège up to

the ridge, and Polly saw without saying a word that her fears were confirmed. No one seemed to heed Mrs. Alexander's complaining about her lost jewels and money, but all listened sorrowfully to Allen's description of what had taken place just before the accident to the yacht.

"Mal and Bob ran down to tell me they were going on board for pulleys, then they explained why we needed them. I told Ed Davis and Charley Levine to go with the two boys and get the pulleys from the carpenter's chest then secure firearms as the Captain suggested. Also they were to find more rope, for we would need all we could carry. Ed was ship's assistant carpenter, you know, and he knew just where to find the pulleys. They were to bring back all the extra necessities at hand, and get away from the vessel again as quickly as possible.

"Up till that time there had been but little change in her position in the crevice, and it did not seem likely that she would move or be broken up until after the floe had thawed well. I watched the four boys climb over upon the deck, and then I turned to order the seamen to load up and carry the stuff up the cliffside.

It could not have been more than five minutes

after the boys had boarded the *Atlanta* before I heard a frightful crunching and the ground under my feet shook with the vibration of what I now saw and heard. The ice-reef had broken away from the jagged shore-line of the island and the entire submerged mass started away, swept off by the swift current that came swirling around the point of the promontory of the land at that point. The poor little *Atlanta,* not able to get free of the clutch of that ice crevice, was carried along with it. There is one great consolation in all this, however, and that is that the yacht being held up by the ice-crack will not be able to fill and sink as rapidly as though she were afloat."

As Allen concluded, Jenks continued nervously: "Yes, and it is fortunate, though you may not see it as I do, that Mal and Bob had Ed and Charley with them. The two seamen are experienced hands and between them they ought to be able to launch the boats and save themselves. There is plenty of water, plenty of food, and other necessities on board, and it may be that their problem will be more readily solved than our own."

The Captain shook his head, however, because this last blow had driven every bit of his courage

and cheerfulness from him. Hop Lee had climbed the cliffside with the last members of the party, and now he caused a ripple of amusement in spite of the gloom which hung over every one.

"Me cookee plenly blekfas, Jenks mate. How me go him closs beek clack in hill?" he pointed to the chasm as he spoke, and his head wagged doubtfully at serving a meal across that gap.

"We will closs heem, Hop Lee," said Officer Jenks, as he began to resume work on pulleying the packs across to the Captain's side.

Then Hop Lee confided a secret to Jenks, and won his approval. "Me cookee din' righd 'way, Jenks mate; plenly full mek no cry, an' salve too mooch cally closs clack, huh?" the Chinaman had said.

Jenks grinned and patted Hop Lee upon the back, then replied, "Cert, Old Pigtails! Cook all you like and give us something to digest besides trouble. Then, as you say, we will not need to pack and carry so much food upon our backs."

So Hop Lee and his kitchen stuff were sent across the gully and he was soon happy in preparing a meal for all concerned.

After an hour of toilsome pulleying and un-

packing and then repacking of stuff across the chasm, Jenks and Allen declared they must move on and find the village before night. Before removing the pulley from the side where the last man waited to send the last pack across the chasm, the seaman stood and shaded his eyes as he gazed carefully over across the gulf for the slightest sign of the yacht or ice floe. But not a speck of anything could he see. Then he turned and removed the pulley from the rope, and crossed the ravine by hand over hand methods. Once safely upon the side with the rest of the *Atlanta's* castaways, the man yanked the rope loose from the other side and drew it up and coiled it for a possible future need.

That afternoon the entire party journeyed across the bad rutty ground of the almost barren island, and reached the strip of stunted woods before night. Not a sign of habitation nor human being did they find, however; and it was surprising that no sign of the two scouts had been found either. This could not be understood!

"They camped that night in the partial protection of the belt of woods, and in the morning resumed their slow march on toward a gleaming

afar off, which promised to be the open sea," Jenks said.

"There we are sure to find the fishing village and our two scouts. But why did they not return to help us?" said the Captain.

They came out of the woods, however, to find their pathway cut short by a torrential stream which tore its way through rock-ribbed banks.

"How in the name of all that's powerful can we get the lame Madam across this?" demanded the impatient and troubled Captain.

"The same way we swung her across the chasm. Tie her up in a blanket and ship her over, whether she howls or not," declared Jenks, who had lost all patience with Mrs. Alexander before she would allow him to send her over the chasm via the pulley-rope.

Mr. Dalken turned away to hide his smile at Jenks' blunt answer, but no one corrected the mate for his speech, since every one met now upon the same footing of companionship. There were no planes of society since leaving the yacht, and Mrs. Alexander had to throw her lot in with the least important sailor from the vessel. She had tried to rebel against such a wholesale manner of making her a common member of a

circle of hard-working seamen, but she was plainly told by her daughter that she could sit upon the ridge and meditate alone, if she preferred her exclusive society to the rest of them. It was noticeable, then, that the lady was glad to join the plebian ranks when Hop Lee called them all to dine.

CHAPTER VI

THRILLS FOR ALL

The camp that previous night had been cold and comfortless, situated as it had been upon the exposed bank of the torrent. But the stunted trees had broken the night winds, and Hop Lee had brewed coffee twice during the night, at twelve and again about dawn, so that warmed the inside of the shivering waifs, but kept them awake also.

When the wanderers came to the edge of the stream and found it barring their farther advance, the same method of crossing was resorted to, as that used to cross the chasm. There was this difference, however: this cleft was not so deep, but it had the swift waters pouring through it. The packs went over safely, then began the crossing of the ladies and girls, and at last the men of the party.

The march was then continued, the hope of

reaching a village and comparative comfort always spurring them on when lagging feet showed how weary were the girls and women. The going was very bad, too. Rutty clumps of earth, and stubble everywhere, cut through soft kid shoes and bruised tender feet.

At midday Hop Lee called a halt for dinner. With sighs of relief every one dropped upon the dry, hard earth and wondered when this strange adventure would end. Even the Captain, able to use his weak legs, gave his litter to Mrs. Alexander, whose ankle had swollen and turned so black and blue as to frighten her into silence.

Soon after resuming the march that noon, the Officers in the lead came to a deep moraine. At the bottom was a stream which seemed composed of melting lumps of ice and drifts of snow which the sun had not melted. So much piled-up débris was blocking this waterway that Jenks concluded it had been recently tossed there.

"I wouldn't be surprised if that recent storm had been the means of carrying this trash in here," said he.

"The question is, how are we to get across, and what do we gain if we do cross? Would it be just as wise for us to follow along the course of

this moraine and find where we come out?" said Mr. Dalken, studying the topography of the place carefully.

"I am inclined to favor your suggestion," said Mr. Tainter. "At least we will not waste time trying to get over and then find we may have to come back."

Thus the wanderers journeyed along the course of the winding stream and eventually learned that they were approaching the sea again. But from an entirely new angle.

"Why," exclaimed Captain Hall, when they paused upon a knoll and gazed around, "this is plain as day! This stream came from the backing up of the waves and tide during the gale, and the masses of ice and débris carried upon the crest of the waves lies here melting and causing obstructions in the ravine. This inlet will bring us to the shore, where we ought to find our two boys, or at least, a handful of fishermen."

This hope held out, renewed the courage and physical powers of all present, and they resumed the march again. But they had to rest again that afternoon, and then they realized that the inlet was widening out at every step they advanced. It

now proved to be a wide though shallow stretch of sea-water to the opposite shore.

There had been no thought of rationing, because no one dreamed of being adrift for more than a day or two. Now, however, Hop Lee reported to the Captain that stores were growing low, and it would be wise to fish or hunt to add to the larder before it became quite bare.

"Oh, we'll reach the village in the morning," declared Mr. Tainter, hopefully.

"We may not find food there," ventured Mr. Dalken.

"Of course we will," laughed Allen, but he sent a glance at Mr. Dalken that warned him to cheer the others up.

The campers slept that night through sheer fatigue, and dawn found them partly rested and eager for breakfast. As one after the other joined the circle about the camp-fire, they learned that Allen and Hop Lee had taken two of the younger men and were fishing. The very idea of catching fish in the river below without bait or tackle caused a laugh from the city tourists. Little they knew about Alaskan fishing!

Half an hour after all were assembled for breakfast, the four men returned carrying a

weed-woven affair which they had converted into a rough net. And in that net were a number of fine fat salmon—enough for dinner at noon and supper that night.

"Well, this solves our food problems," laughed Polly, as she admired the sleek backs of the fish.

"One of them! Man cannot live on fish alone," added Mrs. Courtney.

"Thank goodness, we won't have to, when we reach the village," added Eleanor.

"When we reach it!" retorted Polly, vaguely.

"Don't you believe there is one just ahead—on the coast?" demanded Eleanor, anxiously.

"I'm only believing what I am seeing these days," was the wise reply. "I am seeing fish, so I believe we can have fish; but I want to see the village and the natives, before I credit my senses with having bread and cake." The way she said this made all laugh heartily, and laughter is good for the soul.

At noon, the next day, the wanderers reached the mouth of the river, but not a sign of a village or of a human being could be seen. The stream had widened so that many small dots of islands cropped up here and there, and this signi-

fied that the water was not very deep. The opposite shore was most inviting, too, because a sheen of green could be seen, and this denoted that the future camp would be pleasanter than one on the gulf side of the island.

"That's because the Japan Current washes by there, but the gulf side is exposed to the blasts from Cape Resurrection," explained Captain Hall, gazing steadily across at the tempting shore.

"What shall we do? Cross in some way, or skirt this shore?" asked Mr. Dalken.

"If we cross we shall have comfort and find ample food, no doubt; even though it may be wild fruits and herbs. If we skirt the bleak shore we might glimpse a vessel and signal it to take us off," was Mrs. Courtney's dual proposition.

"How are we going to get across this wide stream?" asked Eleanor. "There are no ferries, no life-savers, and no bridges." She laughed jokingly, as she ended.

"Who says there are no bridges?" called Allen gayly.

"We all say so. Can you produce one?" demanded Polly.

"Wait and see. You said seeing was believing." Then the young officer and his men set to work and constructed a rope bridge of the roots and tough seaweed piled high everywhere. So fast did this weaving proceed that a stout cable was soon ready for trial. Then one of the hardy sailors stripped to his undergarment and plunged into the water, carrying the end of the rope with him. All eyes watched in amazement, as here and there he could stand upright in the river, thus proving how shallow it really was. He reached the first island, which was large enough to accommodate all the party, but he did not stop here. On he went, from one island to the next, sounding the depths of the river between, and finally coming out upon the opposite shore. Now he seemed to stop suddenly, gaze at the ground, and then fall upon his knees. In another moment he was up, waving his hands and shouting for dear life. What he wished to convey, however, could not be heard, because the distance was too great, and the wind carried his voice out to sea.

He secured the rope to something projecting from the sand, and then he began his return trip. This was made in much shorter time, because he

knew there was little danger of being carried away by any sudden current or false channel. When he got to the first island again, he took up the end of the rope he had secured there, and began, hand over hand, hauling on the impromptu bridge. Meanwhile several of the other sailors had started to swim across to the island, and now these joined the first man, to help with the bridge and to hear what had caused his surprise on the far shore.

One after another of the girls started across the rope bridge, but this was accomplished by their crawling along upon their stomachs, face first, and using their feet as clutches and their hands as propellers. It was no graceful sight, but who cared? Every one was eager to reach the green shore where all hoped to find warmth and comfort.

When Mrs. Alexander was started across the bridge, the strands began to ravel, though the lady closely held in the stalwart arms of one of the huskiest sailors in the crew remained serenely oblivious of the fact. Allen and the Captain were watching anxiously, and praying for it to hold together until both had placed foot on the island. Sometimes our prayers are not answered,

but this does not say they are not heard. An all-wise One uses *judgment* in granting our wishes. So it was with these prayers.

Just as Ebers, the strong sailor, reached the middle of the bridge, the strands parted suddenly, dropping both the man and his burden into the water. Mrs. Alexander screamed and threw both arms about her deliverer's neck, but the stream was shallow, and Ebers had no difficulty in gaining his feet. Both were drenched, however, and this was cause enough for the lady to keep up constant complaints until sleep closed her lips that night.

Before the Captain and Mr. Dalken could cross that way, the impromptu bridge had to be repaired, and this took time. There was ample weed on the island for weaving, and this time all hands helped in the work. It was decided, too, during this work, that in crossing the next bridge Mrs. Alexander could be taken over in a form of litter made of the weed, and held by two men, instead of risking the bridge and delaying the crossing as before.

The moment the Captain had gained the island, he asked the scout what he had seen on

the distant shore to cause his evident surprise. And this is what he said.

"Like Crusoe, I found the imprint of feet in the soil, and I tied my rope to a stake that had been driven recently into the beach for some purpose. The tracks were made by several men wearing heavy-soled shoes like my own, and I feel confident that they were worn by our two men. The trail led me down to the water's edge, and there I saw where a boat's keel had grazed the beach. In fact, it must have happened to-day or the tide would have washed away the impressions in the sand. I feel sure that Officer Jenks' two men are safe, and we shall find them soon."

This news cheered every one wonderfully, and the duckings which followed several overturnings of the impromptu bridge failed to dampen their feelings. Hours passed in fording the wide river, and when all were standing upon the sandy shore, but few of them could boast a dry rag of clothing.

Hop Lee built a roaring camp-fire of drift-wood, and soon the wet clothing and dripping hair were being dried around the fire. A good hot meal warmed the castaways, and beds were

sought that night with lighter hearts than had been beating for many days.

Signal fires were kept burning all night, but no response was heard. In the morning, the Captain told off his men into four groups. He headed one, Mr. Dalken another, Allen a third, and Mr. Tainter the fourth. These parties were to scout for signs of Jenks' two men, or for a possible way to get help. Perhaps a fishing smack or a village might be found along the shore.

Polly and her girl friends insisted upon accompanying Mr. Dalken and Corney. Red and several sailors went with Mr. Tainter. Allen and the Captain chose their own men, and each party followed a different course in order to cover the island before night. Then they would meet and report at the camp.

They climbed and crawled over barriers and trash in order to gain a high point of the island, whence they might have a general survey of the waters round about, but they found a deep moraine in their way, and crossing this was out of the question. Consequently they were forced unwillingly to retrace their steps.

When all four scouting parties met at camp

again, the reports were not encouraging, because not a sign of human being could be found on the island, though several old camp-fires were recognized by the ashes. If Jenks and his men were the ones that made the tracks in the beach, then it was likely that they had built the fires which now remained as a sign to their friends.

The second day in camp was given to fishing and hunting any roots, herbs or berries which might be edible. The store of food taken from the *Atlanta* was well-nigh gone, only a few cans of meat and fruit being left. The girls found plenty of shellfish as the tide went out, and these were used to make broth.

The third day promised to fill all minds with forebodings over the food question, for now even the berries and roots such as had been gathered the previous day were hard to find. But few fish were caught, and the portions measured out to every one were insufficient to assuage the pangs of hunger. Only one member in the camping group complained selfishly—and that one was Mrs. Alexander. Everything that had happened since leaving San Francisco was blamed on poor Dodo,—but Dodo was used to it.

The fourth day the campers were existing on shellfish, and now the driftwood with which to keep the signal fires smoking by day, and a fire by night, was becoming scarce. Every one but Mrs. Alex. spent the daytime in seeking for food and wood; it was a discouraging task, with but little reward for all the trouble. They tramped and climbed and brought back too meager a portion of food for the empty stomach or wood for fires.

Conditions seemed hopeless, and even Mr. Dalken looked worried. No answering signal had come to their fires, and the Captain said it would be reckless to use more ammunition in firing guns when it seemed that only the sky and sea heard the shots.

Immediately after breakfast, (or the hot liquor brewed from seaweed and berries which Hop Lee called breakfast,) Polly and her two chums, Eleanor and Dodo set out to conquer the island or be conquered in the attempt. No one was told of their decision, hence no one knew they planned to adventure upon an almost impossible errand. When the three girls were starting, however, Mrs. Courtney called to them.

"Pick up anything that looks edible—be it shell

or greens." And the girls nodded and continued on their way.

"The boys have combed the beach every day, Polly, and not a thing have they found," replied Dodo, when Polly said they would hunt along the beach on their way to the fresh-water stream where Hop Lee got his supply of drinking water.

"That doesn't mean we cannot find a fish to-day!" retorted Polly, shading her eyes in order to scan the wide glistening sands. But not a dark object could she see.

The tide had gone out, leaving a high-water line of tiny shells and colored stones, but no meat was found in the empty shells. Still hoping against hope, the girls plodded on through the heavy sand, until they reached a line of dwarfed salt-water shrubs. These strange little bushes, or stumpy trees, formed a semicircle in the shape of a horseshoe. But to reach the inside of the circle, it was necessary to climb over the growth of about ten to twelve feet in diameter, or to wade through the shallow water on the beach and enter by the mouth of the horseshoe. Because the shrubs were full of broken-off branches, and these were jagged, the girls decided to wade along the beach for a short distance and pass

idea of searching *within* the semicircle for booty.

Polly had traversed half the distance on the horseshoe of shrubs that way. They had no beach which stretched before the opening of the horseshoe, when she suddenly cried out, and stopped to see what had hurt her foot. The two girls just behind her stopped also, and asked what happened.

"I don't know. I thought something bit my foot, but I can see nothing. Still, it hurts as though a stinger is in it."

"Sit down and pull off your shoe at once—don't go and get blood-poisoning on top of all our other troubles," cried Eleanor, concernedly.

So, with two girls helping her limp up from the water, Polly reached a hump in the sand and sat upon it while she began taking off the shoe. Eleanor and Dodo stood in front of her waiting to see what might be discovered inside the shoe or stocking.

It was well Polly sat down upon the great hump of sand, or else there might not have been the over-supply of food and oil thus procured. Before the shoe had been unlaced, the two girls standing directly in front of Polly, thought they saw an undulating motion in the sand dune

upon which their chum was sitting. And Polly stopped suddenly in her work of removing the shoe, to stare in bewilderment at the sandy seat. It looked exactly as it did when she first sat down, and all three girls feared they were becoming light-headed from famine. Eleanor rubbed her eyes and Dodo patted her forehead gently to remove any possible mist from brain and sight.

Polly leaned down and took hold of her shoe once more. At this movement of her body, another slight tremor seemed to heave under her, and her two friends distinctly saw the undulating motion again.

With a cry of dismay Polly leaped from her seat and stood back with Eleanor and Dodo, staring with widened eyes at the mass of piled-up sand. Suddenly another tremor quivered along the ridge of the dune, and almost simultaneously the sand cracked and disclosed a dark oily surface directly under it.

"Great Cæsar's ghost!" exclaimed Dodo, clutching her companions by the arm. "What is that?"

"Something that has life—and it must have come from the sea during high tide," cried Polly,

TO THE GREAT AMAZEMENT OF THE GIRLS A HUGE FIN WAS DISCLOSED.

hastily casting fear behind and falling upon her knees to scrape off as much sand as she could move with her hands.

"Something alive! But look at the size of it! Why, Poll, it can't be a fish—it's more than twenty feet long," was Eleanor's unbelieving retort.

Dodo was now scraping away the sand as fast as Polly was, and to the great amazement of all three girls a huge fin was soon released. The slippery, shiny skin of the monster caused the hands of the two girls to look grimy in short order, and a smell of fishy salt water came from the body, which was but partly uncovered.

Polly straightened herself, sent Eleanor a knowing look, then called to Dodo. "Girls! we've won the fight. We've conquered the island!"

"What do you mean, Poll!" gasped both her friends.

"It's a whale left high and dry by the tide. It may have been sick or dying, but it is not quite dead, so we can make use of it in some way."

The relief of hearing this good news gave rise to Eleanor's usual love of fun, and she exclaimed merrily: "Poll, it must have been the spirit of

the whale that bit your foot. The poor departing ghost wanted you to cremate it in proper fashion."

"Oh, my foot! I forgot all about it, but now that you mention it I do feel that stinger." And with this, Polly sat down again and pulled off her shoe and stocking. Sure enough! There she found a tiny sea-spider, which was as anxious to get away as Polly was to have it go.

You may be sure the girls lost no time in racing back to camp to tell the wonderful news. And you may also be sure that no one—not even Mrs. Alexander—remained in camp to moan or groan over their bad luck. The horseshoe won the battle over the island—so said Mrs. Alexander who was as superstitious as are most ignorant persons.

But Eleanor declared it was the shoe, not the horse that won.

And Polly added: "Not a horse but a whale."

Dodo, not wishing to be left out of the discussion, laughed and said: "The spider for luck!"

CHAPTER VII

THE RESCUE

So engrossed became every one in the work of hauling the whale from its grave of sand that all other things were forgotten and ignored. As soon as the mammoth fish was fully exposed, it was found that a broken harpoon had caused its death, and the incoming tide had carried the dying creature up on the beach. The fact that it died from such a cause made it possible for its flesh to be eaten without fear, and it was most palatable to the starving waifs. The main thing that raised their hopes, however, was the fact that there would be ample whale oil with which to continue their signals, and for such heat as might be required.

Hop Lee and his helpers combined forces with several of the sailors, and the dissecting of the whale began. One of the sailors had been on a cruise with a whaling crew to the North Atlantic,

and he understood how to cut and draw off the greater portion of oil. This work was all to be done on the horseshoe beach, and then the proceeds could be carried to camp with more ease.

All that day passed while the campers worked and sweated, and it was late before they decided to return to camp. The soft gray evening light cast bewildering shadows over land and sea as they started campwards, and it was no wonder they thought they were seeing shadows moving about their camp site, as they came within sight of it.

The nearer they approached, the more certain they felt that figures were moving about. Mr. Dalken and the boys hurried in advance of the others, in order to make sure and find out who could be in possession of their only home in the north.

Captain Hall had splendid eyesight, however, and before the advance guard reached the suspicious persons in camp, he gave a glad yell of welcome, and started running as fast as his sea-legs would carry him, with extended hands and streaming eyes.

It proved to be his two seamen. And this was

their story, told to a happy circle about the camp-fire that evening.

"We left you on the *Atlanta* without a doubt of returning within a few hours. But we had to crawl and climb over that ice-reef, and then we found our way cut short by an enormous crevice which we had no means of crossing." Allen nodded understandingly, and Jenks made notes as the man continued.

"We followed the line of that crevice, mile after mile, until our feet almost fell off with numbness, and our eyes were almost blind from the glare of the ice over which we were going. But we knew we must find some way of escaping from the berg, and we kept on until finally we came within sight of the sea again. There the crevice ended in a sloping down of the reef to the water's edge and we managed to cross to the shore of the island where probably no human had ever set foot, until we came upon the scene.

"Well, we skirted the beach of the island for a distance, to determine whether it was habitable, or safe, and before we turned to go back to the ship the twilight overtook us. We tramped on, nevertheless, and followed the beach-line as far as we could go, but no opportunity to get back to

the floe was found. Finally we came to a torrent which was filled with blocks of ice and trash, but we had no way of crossing it.

"All night we wandered on, and early morning gave us a peep of the gulf again. We had gone clear across the island, by following the torrent which was merely a great flood of sea water that the iceberg had backed up, and was now emptying out again. Hopelessly, we started a camp-fire and caught a few fish for breakfast. Then we wandered along the beach, building fires as we went, for signals, in case a passing boat might happen along our way.

"All that day passed without sight or sound from a human being or from the *Atlanta*, and then at sundown, we saw a long boat manned by naked men, skimming swiftly over the water. We shouted and hailed and piled on the drift-wood to create as much smoke as possible, and finally we had the joy of seeing them turn in our direction.

"It proved to be a number of Esquimaux going home from their fishing trip. They picked us up and carried us to their native village on the shores of Kodiak Island opposite the entrance to Cook's Inlet.

"From this small settlement we had to get in communication with other villages along the coast, and after several days' delay we were taken on board a small vessel which plies its way back and forth once every two weeks, stopping at the larger towns or villages, to pick up passengers, or to trade. We reached Seward in this way, and here we are: a vessel safely anchored in the inlet half a mile from here, and everything set to take you to Seward—more than a week after you were expected there by the several men, who had received your letters telling of your proposed visit."

The last part of this explanation was directed to Mr. Tainter, and he smiled and bowed in acknowledgment of the message.

The unanimous vote of the castaways to break camp at once was vetoed by Jenks and the Esquimaux, and so they formed a circle about the fire and exchanged stories of their experiences since they left the *Atlanta*. Tears rolled down the weather-beaten cheeks of the two sailors when they heard how the brave lads had disappeared with the vessel, in trying to carry off necessary things for the castaways.

As happened, whenever the lost boys were

mentioned, a pall of gloom and sadness fell upon every one, and now the story told to the newcomers to the camp seemed all the more dreadful. Jenks said it would have been better to have learned positively that the gallant boys had met death instantly, rather than to have had them drag on a frightfully drawn-out existence upon a floating iceberg with no means of rescue.

Nerves were too wrought up after that to permit any one but Hop Lee to sleep, so they sat planning and hoping until the early morning when the seamen told Jenks they might start.

When all were crowded into the small vessel, spirits rose higher than the waves and bergs that had wrecked the *Atlanta*. Mr. Dalken was glad to see how quickly his friends reacted from the recent strain and almost fatal experiences, and he called to them all:

"Have we agreed to catch the next steamer back to Seattle, or shall we make good on this tour and go on our way?"

"Go back? I should hope not, after all we have been through to get this far," exclaimed Polly, emphatically.

While her friends laughed, Eleanor added: "I might say, we haven't arrived yet. How do

we know what Alaska is like, when we haven't as much as glimpsed it's coast-line. Most tourists have that much satisfaction."

Since the general opinion proved to be a vote to go on with the tour which had had such an unexpected beginning, the Captain said: "Bad beginnings make good endings, you know."

"It's all very well for you folks to talk this way, but I demand every attention and a comfortable trip back to 'Frisco the moment you can arrange for me," said Mrs. Alexander, plaintively.

"That's where you should have remained, Maw, when we told you that this trip was no society gambol," remarked Dodo, impatiently.

"How could I remain behind, when it is a mother's duty to take care of her only child?" whined Mrs. Alex.

"I hate to disillusionize you, Maw, but truth must be told for once: you know that Paw took care of me for the first ten years of my life on earth, and then the school took care of me, while you traveled and forgot I was alive. At fifteen you remembered, and when I was discovered to have intelligence and training, and was anything but a Plain Jane, I also discovered a parent in

you that saw the advantage in using me for a wedge in society. Since that memorable discovery, I have had to take care of *you* most of the time, to spare Paw's feelings and your friends' respect." Dodo's face became scarlet before she had ended this blunt statement, and she felt ashamed of herself the moment she had spoken, but human nature will bear only a given burden of trouble and worry, and then it breaks the bonds and relieves itself. This happened to Dodo now. Having had her say before her friends and comrades in trouble, she began to feel better. And, strangely enough, Mrs. Alexander never said a word in defense of herself. Polly exchanged glances with Eleanor, and Mrs. Courtney saw and understood. Instantly she changed the drift of conversation to one more interesting and general.

"Where do you expect to land us, Officer?" asked she.

"This vessel was about to start for Homer when I engaged it to search for my fellow travelers, and it would save the Captain an explanation to his company and loss of time if we are satisfied with his plan to go there first, and

there perhaps transfer us to a larger and more commodious boat."

"We are so thankful to be landed anywhere upon inhabited soil, that Homer sounds almost as good as home to me," laughed Mr. Dalken.

"How about the ladies, and Mr. Tainter?" asked Captain Hall.

"Oh, Homer will have to answer for me, too. But ask the ladies regarding their wishes. And how about yourself, Captain," said Mr. Tainter.

"We want to go wherever Dalky goes," returned Eleanor, speaking for herself and her friends.

"I want to start a searching party at once, to get information about my boat and those boys. We may be in time to save them, even at this late hour," responded the Captain, but his words disapproved Homer.

"Yes, that is one reason for my saying we ought to land at the nearest port where we can get in communication with the world, or at least, with this portion of it," agreed Mr. Dalken.

"Well, then, Homer will not be the port. It is in one of the best coal districts in Alaska, and at this time of the year, there are many vessels of all kinds and sizes coming in and going out

of the ports, but they are barges and coaling ships, without passenger accommodations. And I doubt if we can find a telegraph or cable office there," explained Jenks.

"Perhaps you can arrange for this vessel to take us direct to Seward, and that will facilitate the search-party's starting without delay," suggested Mr. Dalken. "We will pay the Captain and the owner of this craft more than they could ever hope to earn in any other way for the time they were engaged to go to Homer."

Captain Hall then used his influence with the half-breed Captain of the boat, and it was finally agreed to carry the tourists straight to Seward.

The unshaven men, and the bedraggled women and girls, in the rescued party were relieved to hear Seward would prove to be a modern refuge during the time it would take to start an expedition to hunt the iceberg that carried off the boys and as much of the wrecked *Atlanta* as might be left. So they were receptive to the peace and serenity that brooded over Resurrection Bay, renamed Harding Gateway, when the vessel sailed at last across the water entrance to the town which is the terminus of the Alaskan

Central Railway. Fairbanks is the inland terminus.

Thus far, although the relation between the Dalken party and Mr. Tainter had been of the friendliest, no one knew just why Corney's uncle had come to Alaska. It was generally accepted, however, that he was taking a pleasure trip with his nephew. Even in the stress of circumstances which followed being wrecked and castaways, the elderly gentleman gave no confidences, though Mr. Dalken had referred to his enterprise in South America, and had said something about neglecting to mention those investments in his will.

A feeling that thanksgiving was due a Supreme Power pervaded the senses of the castaways, as they stepped from the stuffy little steamer, to the terra firma of Seward, and realized they were in civilization once more. Even Eleanor felt no desire to joke or tease, and they all started for the hotel.

Once there, however, instinct roused Mr. Tainter to resume his usual business self, and to Mr. Dalken's astonishment he stood by and heard this elderly man ask for news of the financial world, then try to send messages to im-

portant mining companies near the railroad to Fairbanks, and in that section of land lying southeast of that city, and northwest of Valdez, a copper center city. Because Mr. Dalken's fortune was fifty per cent. in copper interests, he took more than a passing thought to Mr. Tainter's eager questions about certain places near the great copper sections.

Mr. Tainter turned from the desk where the information given him was too meager to be of assistance in his figuring, and Mr. Dalken smilingly said: "You'll find me a better information bureau than this young man. I hold interests in this land myself, and I keep tabs on it."

"Oh, is that so! I thought all your investments were in South America now?" returned Mr. Tainter.

"Only my last six months' work is represented there. We took the southern cruise for a far different motive than investing in financial deals or land, but the particular deal I had on and thought to clear on, was postponed, and so I made the most of other opportunities. This Alaskan tour was proposed for that same postponed motive, and as yet I have not had the

returns, though I expect to clear fairly well at any time now."

Mr. Tainter, being ignorant of Mrs. Courtney's attraction for the financier, thought his companion referred to speculations. He now confided in him, somewhat.

"Well, since you are already interested in stocks here, tell me what you might think of taking stock in the proposed railroad from Fairbanks, via Salcha, Washburn and Richardson, to Skagway and Haines, there to form a junction with the Juneau road?"

"I thought you were interested in coal?" ventured Mr. Dalken.

"I would be, if this railroad went through. But to get into coal now would be for Cornelius only. I like the game of playing cars," chuckled the white-haired man.

"So do I. It's most fascinating, isn't it, to see your toys going back and forth, bringing tons of products to the waiting world, and carrying millions of souls here and there, and then counting your dividends regularly. It's the surest game in the world, if one has nerve," returned Mr. Dalken.

Mr. Tainter smiled, then he said: "I've heard

of you on the Street, Mr. Dalken, and I've never heard anything to your discredit; but I have been told you were a hard-headed and wide-awake financier. I managed to keep a seal on Corney's lips and upon my own, from the moment I learned you were to join the *Atlanta's* touring party, but I need not to have troubled so much. Now I'll confess: I'm sent here by my friends in London, England, to investigate and report on exact conditions existing on that proposed line to Skagway. As you know, the southwesterly section of the road will pass over Canadian ground, hence the British financiers may be interested more than you Americans think. If one of our group had lived another year, he would have been here instead of me, but Courtney died last winter, and that sent me here—unwillingly, I'll admit."

Mr. Dalken caught his breath. "Courtney, did you say?"

"Yes, he was at one time a wonderful engineer, but fast living played the deuce with his health, and he finally gave up the game of both piling up wealth and spending it on riotous living. With all the scandalous stories circulated about him, he nevertheless still retained his connections with

our financiers, because he was keen, quick and honest."

"I've heard about him—that is why I seemed surprised to learn he was dead. It must have happened while I was in South America."

"I suppose so. Poor chap, once he was dead, his gay companions had no time for him. Only his business associates attended his funeral, and his attorneys were chief mourners—though that sounds like satire, eh?" Mr. Tainter smiled.

"I wonder if he was the relative Mrs. Courtney has referred to," was the veiled suggestion thrown out by Mr. Dalken.

"Why, her name is Courtney, too, isn't it. I never thought of that,—she being an American."

"She had distant connections in England I believe, but she never speaks of them. I've heard said that she considered them a disgrace in the family, so we wouldn't think of annoying her with questions," was Mr. Dalken's diplomatic remark.

"Certainly not. She may know about this one's death, or she may not, but I don't suppose she concerns herself over it, either way," agreed Mr. Tainter.

But Mr. Dalken decided to make it *his* con-

cern, and find out if this particular Courtney was the renegade husband legally separated from the woman he wanted for his wife. If that were true, then the obstacle the lady brought forth as her objection to marriage would be removed from his path.

Within a day of the time after the landing of the rescued mariners from the barren island, Captain Hall was ready to start his quest; Mr. Tainter was eager to start on his errand for the London investors; and Mr. Dalken was impatiently waiting for Mrs. Courtney's answer to his suggestion that a cable be sent immediately to inquire into a Courtney's death in England.

Jenks and the surviving members of the crew of the *Atlanta* went with Captain Hall to find or to get information about the derelict and its victims. Polly and her friends stood watching the little steamer, which had been hired by Mr. Dalken, leave port, and many were the prayers which were wafted after it that success might crown this humane voyage.

There was little to do at Seward to pass away the time that must elapse before word would reach them regarding the search for Mal and Bob and the two sailors. Mr. Dalken suggested,

therefore, that they all try to forget sad memories and go for a trip to Fairbanks, over the first railroad built in Alaska. And this was gladly agreed to.

Mrs. Adair and Mrs. Alexander had, through mutual woes, founded a friendship, and it was a usual thing now to find them together condoling with each other over their incorrigible daughters, and the unhappy conditions forced upon them by the wreck of the *Atlanta*. Mrs. Adair was too sensible, however, to place any of the blame upon the Captain, or any members of the passenger list. Mrs. Alexander took a different view of that matter, and first one, then another, of all those whom she knew was the cause of the iceberg being placed just where it might strike the vessel.

When the trip to Fairbanks was proposed the two ladies instantly objected. Said Mrs. Adair: "I'm going to remain just where I am safe, and you'll find me here upon your return."

Mrs. Alexander immediately abetted her, by adding: "And I shall try to recover from my nervous shock and the weak ankle. Dodo may go with you, because that will give me more quiet and peace."

Lois Adair wanted to go with the young people, but her mother thought it would not be polite to ask Mrs. Courtney to chaperon so many girls—as if one more mattered!

"Polly," whispered Lois, anxiously, soon after her mother had refused to have her go on the jaunt, "Do coax Mrs. C—to tell mummy it is all right for me to go. Make her tell her that she *wants* me to be with you-all."

"Leave it to us, Lois. If we can fix it for you, we'll do it," returned Polly.

Dodo and Eleanor were taken into Polly's confidence and all three girls went to tell Mrs. Courtney of Lois' wish to go with them. And Mrs. Courtney promised to see about it at once.

It had been planned to start in the morning, and it was necessary for all to be ready the night before. Consequently, Mrs. Adair must be approached before any more time passed.

Mrs. Courtney used her usual diplomacy in persuading Lois' mother that it would be very charming of her to concede the point and permit her daughter to accompany the tourists to Fairbanks, and Mrs. Adair capitulated with but one argument: She remembered that Lois had had weak lungs once upon a time, and it was danger-

ous for the girl to be exposed to cold or dampness.

"Why, Mother! That attack of croup when I was two years old has never been repeated. The doctor said I had lungs which might answer for a caliope in a circus troupe. You know how angry you were with him for saying that, because you liked to make me appear delicate."

"Lois, there are things one never tells a child—particularly when she is nervous," persisted Mrs. Adair.

"But I am not a bit nervous, Mother. You've told me yourself, when you've had nervous attacks. You often wished I did have nerves, that I might sympathize with you," argued Lois.

"Come, come, Lois, let us be going for our outfits if we are to pack and be off early," hinted Polly, and Lois ran out of the room, leaving the battlefield to Mrs. Courtney.

Once out of Mrs. Adair's hearing, Lois remarked to her friends: "The idea of having Mother say I had weak lungs and could not stand the damp or cold! Why, I never knew what warmth was during our life on board the *Atlanta,* and afterwards on the island; and I'm sure I hadn't one stitch of dry clothing on my body for

five days—after it got soaked in fording the streams, it never did get dry enough to be comfortable."

Polly and Dodo laughed heartily at the speech, and Lois added: "I wonder what Mother would consider cold and dampness!"

Outfits purchased at one of the stores in Seward could not boast Paris styles or imported materials, but they were comfortable, and suitable for just such trips as Mr. Dalken had proposed; and above all they could be worn without fear of the damp or cold so dreaded by Mrs. Adair.

CHAPTER VIII

AN ICEBERG REFUGE

WHILE Polly's friends are speeding northward on the train to Fairbanks, passing towering glaciers which reflect myriad colors like a rainbow; or skimming by ice-packed valleys between the glaciers where the dirt from neighboring mountain peaks mixes and forms new earth surfaces, and has been doing so for thousands of years; then slowing up to give the tourists a sight of marvelous waterfalls, and magnificent lakes and torrents, Captain Hall and his rescuing crew were well on their way down the Gulf, signaling every boat passed for word of the derelict —if so it could be called.

The wireless was used frequently during the trip, and wherever a station was located along the coast, or the wireless on passing steamers, the answer picked up failed to encourage the Captain.

"I don't know why I say this, Captain," remarked Jenks in one of the conferences with the chief officer, "but I wish to place it on record that I want you to change the course and sail closer to the islands southward of Kodiak Island. Don't think me queer, if I confess that I've had two strange visions—one last night, and one the night before. In a flash, I seemed to see those boys living on a small island in the locality I mentioned, and hailing us to rescue them."

"Why, Jenks, I hope your own experience has not affected your brain," smiled Captain Hall.

"I have never been more serious, Captain. I was on the lookout, scanning the waters with the glasses, when suddenly I saw the sort of mirage I just described to you. When I tried to take a better sight, it was gone, and the sea was cleared of anything that could be called an island or a wreck."

"I've heard of mental telepathy, but never of mental photography," chuckled the Captain.

"Never mind joking, Captain, but order the crew to steer westward this once. If we find nothing, I will stand for the cost of the trip off the planned course. If you do find a clue you'll be glad I had the vision, or whim, or whatever

you wish to call it," said the first mate so impressively that the Captain sat with head bowed in thought for a long time. Then he got up, placed a hand upon Jenks' shoulder, and said in a low voice:

"Jenks, I've had just such an experience years ago, and I was not joking when you told me of your vision, but I was trying to overcome my nervous chill at memory of what had happened long ago. We'll change the course and steer straight for the Kodiak Islands!"

And so they did. Sailing for several days, using Cape Trinity for their focusing point, Captain Hall and his men kept a constant watch for any small piece of wreckage which might lead to the information they sought. There were several small floes passed during the trip, but not one which carried the least sign of wreckage.

The Japan Current brought balmy weather and the hopes of finding the boys more comfortable upon one of the numerous small dots of land about Trinity Island, than the Captain's charges had been upon the barren island they had been cast upon. Jenks' vision had become generally known, and his companions had an intuitive belief

that it would prove to be a leader and guide to the lost young men.

Finally, Trinity Island was sighted, but Jenks insisted upon keeping on in the direction of the uncharted small islands southward.

Captain Hall insisted upon touching at Trinity, nevertheless, and hoped to hear news of some import concerning the *Atlanta* or its survivors. The crew was employed in restocking the storeroom, while the Captain and Jenks made their inquiries of the Esquimaux and fishermen that might have picked up floating wreckage, or anything to identify the lost craft.

One of the native fishermen was brought to the Captain with a tale of having seen a giant ice floe far out in the Gulf, one day immediately following the norther. As far as he could figure the time now, it might have been a month previously.

"Ho!" exclaimed Captain Hall, "we were still in 'Frisco at that time. Your berg and the one I seek are two different ones altogether, even as the northers are only brothers."

Having investigated without any result, the Captain and his officers continued the quest to the tiny dots of wonderful vegetation which make

the coast-line of Alaska Peninsula—once called the Unalaska Peninsula—the marvel of natural beauty it is during the summer season.

The vessel touched at several such dots of earth, and, finding only a handful of fishermen living on each of them, they sailed on. Allen became impatient and called upon the Captain.

"We are losing valuable time in this aimless search. We might have located the boys long before this, had we gone on as first outlined."

"Well, Allen, I am a second Columbus. Give me one more day, and if you do not meet with results then I'll agree to leave this island quest," was Jenks' pleading request.

Like Columbus, Jenks proved to be right.

That afternoon the vessel passed a whaling boat, which upon signaling it, stopped its engine. The natives made signs, and Jenks started off in one of the small boats to meet them. Since no one in the Captain's crew understood Esquimaux, and the natives could speak no English, the conversation consisted mainly of signs and symbols. But Jenks gathered that, several miles southwest of Chirikof Island, the whaler's crew had picked up floating spars and enough wreckage to show the current had carried driftwood down from the

north. He also learned that there were islands dotted to the west of Chirikof where rising smoke had been seen, but no investigation had taken place.

With this encouraging news, the crew put on full steam and rounded Chirikof Island, before night made it necessary for them to cast anchor. But the dots of land before mentioned could be seen plainly. And during the twilight which takes the place of our darkness, Captain Hall and his officers saw a beacon light glowing from one of the most southerly dots. Answering flashes were sent to the island, but they failed to bring the response looked for.

The first opportunity given by the coming of daylight, the crew set sail for the group of islands. Several were passed without any success in finding the white men, then Jenks felt a strange thrill pass down his spine, and he pointed to one of the smallest dots of the group. The glasses showed signs of habitation by white men, and the boat was sent ashore with the Captain and Jenks in it. It was not so simple a landing as seemed possible from the ship, because of the many hidden reefs and dangerous inlets which formed its shore-line.

Twenty minutes after landing, Jenks and his men turned a wooded bend in the sandy washout which they were following, and came face to face with Mal O'Gowen and Bob Graves. Had it not been for the happy look and joyful cry of recognition from the castaways, one would scarcely have believed these wild looking beings were the one-time neat youths.

The story the boys had to tell their rescuers was postponed until the first mate had led his foundlings back to the Captain, who had been persuaded to remain in the boat. Such thanksgiving as then followed cannot be described by any one that has never experienced a similar trial.

Captain Hall commanded every one on the rescuing steamer to refuse listening to any recitals until the boys had been cared for. Then, after food, baths, and sleep had been enjoyed by the boys, they were ready with their tale. Mal, being a good story-teller, began.

Mal's Story of Their Ice Voyage

"We boarded the *Atlanta* without seeing any great change in its position, wedged as it was between the ice floes, and we thought the Captain had abandoned his craft too soon—there might

be hope of saving her still. This we thought, as we went about looking up necessities and packing them in the smallest possible space. We selected such things as would be the most valuable under the circumstances. And it was well we did this.

"We had been on board not more than fifteen minutes, and all the packs we had filled were arranged along the side where we expected to get off again, to the ice, when a frightful concussion came from the opposite side of the vessel—that side where the crag had been melting and sliding. The anchor driven into the ice and reinforced by the iron staples, held us firmly to the other floe, however, and then we beheld to our horror that a great mass of ice had broken from the berg, and this, also the one upon which we were caught, were moving out to sea.

"We gazed with failing hearts at the fast-receding shore of the island where you all were, and we knew that now it was but a matter of time before we would be engulfed or wrecked where we were.

"Charley and Ed there know their business, all right, so Bob and I placed ourselves under their orders, and told them to command the ship as long as it would stick together.

"It was Ed's opinion that we should quickly transfer all stores and whatever we might need in the future to the large floe that provided anchorage for the ship, because he soon proved to us that the melting ice was loosening the grip of the ropes about the staples. So we worked as never before, and carried all sorts of goods from the vessel to the place on the iceberg where we found a flat cave-like refuge.

"Before we had moved half of the packs we had placed along the steamer's side, we realized that the craft was breaking up fast. The terrific strain brought about by having the floe loosen its grip on one side dragged the entire structure apart. Still the mass of ice and wreckage was floating swiftly down the Gulf, in a westerly direction. And Ed told us we had best be off the ship before the warm waters of the Japan Current played havoc with the floes.

"We had enough time to remove timber for the building of rafts, and we took all the blankets, gears, and even personal effects of value left behind by the passengers. All this was placed in the ice-cave on the berg—in case we were sighted and rescued by some ship.

"Charley even suggested that we lower the

boats and fasten them in some way to the floe, because it might transpire that they could be saved in that way, should the *Atlanta* go to pieces. This we tried to do, but only succeeded in saving one boat, when the crash did come.

"Then came the test of courage! Bob and I were rolling a cask of water toward the ice-cave, when the disaster came. Ed saw a sudden rift made between the loose berg and the ship and he instantly shouted to Charley to drop everything and run for the floe. Charley ran, and Ed jumped upon the planks we had placed across from the *Atlanta* to the berg that held us. He was half across when the final lurch happened, and the planks were shot down into the sea. Ed sprang with such momentum that he landed upon the ice lower down from the spot where the bridge had been. Here he gripped hold of a projecting point of ice and screamed to us to lower a rope.

"Bob and I had dropped the cask at the awful sound that well-nigh paralyzed us, but Ed's yell for help acted like a released spring—we rushed for a rope and soon had it lowered to his level. He lost no time in grasping it, and then we hauled and landed him beside us. But what of Charley?

"He had not been able to reach the plank bridge before it was sent down into the water, and he now caught at the nearest support. Fortunately we had carried a number of life-belts to the side of the boat to be removed at our next trip, and Charley managed to get a hand on one of these and then fastened it about his body.

"The greatest danger now would be should the *Atlanta* capsize and carry everything down with it in the vortex created. But this did not happen. The berg floated with such swiftness that the very impetus of its forward progress served to push the little yacht in closer to its ice-hold. And the force of the waves and the constant rocking of the smaller ice floes about the giant one pounded upon the sides of the little craft and kept ripping and breaking its timbers apart and scattering them over the sea as the berg went its way.

"Charley remained on the boat and we stood on the berg, a chasm between us, all waiting for some miracle to save him. But the miracle kept on happening right before our eyes and we failed to note it as such.

"Before the night brought its numbing cold, we had great signal fires burning upon the peak

of the iceberg, but we feared to overfeed the flames (though we had plenty of driftwood washed up from the wreckage) because the heat from the fire might start another rift, and the old floe was all the home we had.

"We kept up an exchange of signals and calls to Charley on the vessel throughout the night, and he managed to signal us that he was still clinging fast to the turned-turtle craft, by lighting matches at intervals and sending a flare up from a tarred rope.

"With the return of daylight we tried out several plans to rescue our comrade, but all proved futile. The breaking up of the yacht happened so quickly now, that it would be short shrift with Charley unless he got away within the next hour. An idea came to me, but it seemed impossible of success, yet there was nothing else proposed, and I advised the other two boys to help in trying it out.

"We took a heavy rope, fastened one end to a plank and then got Charley's attention fixed upon our plan. We brought several rockets from the ship, and we tied the smaller rope which had been tied to the heavier one, to the rocket, then we aimed and shot the missile straight at the

bit of deck that still held together under Charley's feet.

"We held our breath as the rocket sped on its errand, and we could scarcely believe our eyes when we saw it land close to a broken post, and remain long enough to give Charley a moment in which to leap upon it and hold it down. In another moment he was sliding and grappling with every kind of spar and wreckage which had been flung upon the deck. But he clung tenaciously to the rope and in some sort of superhuman way he managed to work, hand over hand, and pull the heavier rope to himself. This used most of his strength, because, had he made a false move, he would have been lost.

"We had secured the plank to the raft timbers we had piled up on the berg, and besides, we were holding on to the rope and bracing our feet against every object we could amass to give us leverage. Then after Charley signaled that he had secured himself to the rope and was ready for us to haul, we began the dangerous work.

"Slowly but surely we got him from the deck, and then we saw him swing over against the icy sides of the rough floe. That accounts for the gashes and scraped skin of his face and arms.

His heavy clothing was in tatters before we got him up beside us, and his whole body was a mass of cuts and bruises, but we saved him!

"Within the hour, not a vestige of the *Atlanta* remained to prove it had ever been a gallant little vessel that now had ended its work.

"Well, the old berg finally entered the Japan Current and then it melted so fast that we feared to remain on its dangerous peak. Crevices split and every few minutes great masses of ice came down and bounced into the sea.

"The boat we had moored to the ice remained for us to use, and by the time we were ready to abandon the floe, we had constructed a rude raft upon which we piled all our salvaged property and such things as would not be ruined by salt water.

"I can't describe the launching of our boat and raft, because we can't remember how it was done—it was so wonderful that it seemed as though forces were at work to help us which we had never paid heed to before. Anyway, we managed to get off without any added disaster, other than having the wash of the waves, created by the berg, fill our boat and completely submerge the raft. But we had roped and secured

most of the articles to the timbers and they held fast.

"We had no oars, but we had constructed a makeshift sail and this we hoisted to a spar, as soon as we were well quit of the floe. The last we saw of that old ice-demon, once our saving angel, was at night, when it vanished in the soft mist created in the twilight.

"We floated for two days, and finally saw land. But we knew not where or what it might be. All we knew was that it was fine and warm now, and the quicker we got on Mother Earth once more the better. So we made for this island, where you found us, and in trying to get ashore the raft was turned over and over, and would have broken up had not one of the main ropes parted and let half of our salvaged goods drop into the sea. This seemed to right the crazy thing, and we dragged it ashore without further trouble. But all the property of the passengers and several casks of water were lost.

"Fortunately the island had good springs of water on it, and wild fruit was to be had for the gathering. We had no trouble in catching fish, and birds were caught in primitive traps. Thus we had ample food and good water, but clothes

and toilet requisites were at the bottom of the little harbor where the raft had emptied them. This accounts for our unshaven looks and the tattered clothes."

Captain Hall and his crew gave three cheers for the boys and the boys gave three cheers for the man and crew that insisted upon searching for them against all odds.

The course ordered by the Captain after he had the boys safely on board had been directly to Seward. There they would decide upon future action. The vessel fairly flew past the islands along the coast of the Peninsula, and then it cut across the strait to Cape Elizabeth. Thence it was not long before the returning search-party landed in port at Seward, nine days after they had sailed out of it.

During that lapse of time Mr. Dalken's friends had visited Fairbanks, and had returned that morning. So they were present when the jubilee over the rescued men took place. Such pleasure and congratulations became the order of the day that Seward will long remember the occasion.

The next day was given to plans by the older men in the group, and pleasure parties by the younger ones. Finally Captain Hall was induced

to accept the offer from Mr. Dalken and Mr. Tainter, to take charge of a recently acquired vessel. It was a rough-looking craft, but the Captain declared it was as seaworthy as any finer boat. The crew were only too glad to sign up with their Captain for the trip, and the following day the entire party left Seward, bound for Prince William Sound, where they planned to land at Cordova, and examine the copper fields.

CHAPTER IX

BAD BEGINNINGS HAVE GOOD ENDINGS

ONCE again the tourists were at the mercy of the Alaskan waters, but they had had their "bad beginning" and now they were going to be repaid by good endings. The Captain followed the coast-line from Seward to Cordova, and the oft-changing scenery proved very interesting to his passengers. Now and then a gaunt lighthouse stood boldly up from the islands or points of land where the dangers might prove fatal to a mariner.

Cordova is really the copper port for Alaska, though there are several other thriving towns that find their only source of income in the copper ore that passes through the companies' hands. Mr. Dalken held blocks of stock in the Kennicott Mine, yet he had never seen the place. Being so near, he determined to go and visit it, but that would take another day after returning

from Valdez and Copper Center, which Mr. Tainter felt anxious to inspect.

The inland sail on Prince William Sound was a changing panorama of scenes. On one side the copper mines and their men could be seen distinctly through the glasses; then farther along the gold quartz claims were seen. This locality, during the Klondike Fever, had drawn thousands of seekers for fortune from every part of the world.

Valdez was visible from the deck of the vessel, and Mr. Dalken told the young people how the city had been built upon the land made by great glaciers. This was familiar description to Polly, who knew all about moraines from her home in the Rockies.

"You would not think now, that Valdez was a very important place, in the financial world, not many years ago," remarked Mr. Tainter. "But so it was—from the railroad schemes planned for it."

The steamer soon left Valdez behind, and the tourists looked forward next to landing at their destination.

Captain Hall found the landing at Cordova much better than he had expected, so the tour-

ists went ashore there and took automobiles to Valdez. This gave them all the time they wished along the road, and more comfortable arrangements than the Alaskan trains could offer.

The reunited party would have agreed to go anywhere, via any kind of transportation, because they were happy and relieved to remember that no fatalities had resulted from their various dangerous vicissitudes following the accident to the *Atlanta*. Therefore, they found a little crowding in the cars something to laugh at, instead of complaining. Even Mrs. Alexander, her ankle almost fully recovered again, smiled and had no objections to offer when she was asked to make room for Mal, in a space wide enough for a sheet of paper.

The morning after reaching Valdez Mr. Dalken invited all who wished to go with Mr. Tainter and him, to see the copper mines, to make haste and be ready to report within ten minutes. So delighted were the girls to be included in this invitation that they would have been willing to go then and there. The boys had already signified their desires to accompany the two men on this trip, but the girls had been left in doubt—whether Mr. Dalken could persuade

Lois' mother and Mrs. Alexander to allow their daughters to go with the rest. Mrs. Courtney had planned to remain quietly in her room at the hotel; now she realized that the girls wanted her to go, too, in order to forestall any objections from the two mothers. So, with a weary sigh the chaperon resigned herself to the inevitable.

The superintendent at one of the principal copper mines escorted the Dalken party about, pointing out the important sights, and entertaining the visitors so that they forgot the flight of time. The girls were permitted to use the picks and find quartz for themselves, but the boys preferred to go down inside the mine with Mr. Tainter and Mr. Dalken.

"Aren't we going down with you?" demanded Eleanor.

"Why, it isn't safe, Nolla," returned Mrs. Courtney.

"If it is quite safe for Dalky and the boys, why not for us?" persisted Eleanor, pouting. "The only reason I came was to see the inside of a mine like this."

"Why, of course!" abetted Polly, anxiously.

"Look in, and see how black it is," suggested Mal.

"I don't want to go down—Dodo and I will stay here until you come back," ventured Lois.

"Speak for yourself, John Alden," laughed Dodo. "I've seen in many mines in Colorado, so that this one can't phase me. But Mrs. Courtney is anxious to have you propose that she remain up here with you."

"I'll be honest—I do want to remain here. Lois and I will amuse ourselves, while you all go down, if you like."

The visit proved to be more interesting than the girls had thought possible, for they saw the great walls of quartz, gleaming with copper as bright as gold. One of the foremen that escorted the party about his section, explained how the quartz was mined from the "drifts" which went deep into the earth. The ore mined in these drifts is hauled and dumped upon flat cars waiting to carry it to the mouth.

The various tools and apparatus used in mining copper ore were shown and explained to the visitors, and each one present was given a souvenir of a nugget of pure copper quartz.

On the return drive to Cordova, one of Alaska's sudden electrical storms compelled them to slacken speed and go carefully over the slip-

pery road. The lightning played about the snow-capped peaks in dazzling flashes, and the thunder, instead of cracking in the sharp peals we are accustomed to hear, rumbled loudly over the mountains, and through the deep valleys.

The guide that led the way with the first touring car turned to Mr. Dalken beside him and said: "If you happened to be up on one of those mountain trails now, you'd never forget the sights. There is little danger from the storm down on this level, though we see and hear all of it."

"We've been up in the Rockies at a time when the atmospheric conditions changed suddenly and caused a similar storm," said Polly.

"Then you know about it, Miss. The day has been unusually warm, and the sun, upon sinking, cools the atmosphere too quickly. The sudden cooling of the heat results in currents of electricity that finally start short-circuiting each other and create the flashes. We quite often have raging blizzards follow a change in temperature, and then it blows over just as suddenly."

The storm passed over the mountain peaks without more than a distant rumble and a few farewell flashes, and then the beautiful soft light,

that always heralds the night in these northern circles, shone resplendant upon land and sea. And the tourists sat silently watching and admiring the impressive scenes.

The following day Mr. Dalken had his party taken to the Kennicott Mine. This time Polly carried a kodak which she was fortunate enough to find in one of the shops at Seward. She proposed taking all the snapshots of the mine, in which their dear Dalky was interested to a great extent of his fortune.

"Polly, we must snap the pictures whenever Dalky gets in the limelight," suggested Eleanor, watching her friend place a roll of films in the box.

"He won't get within focus if he knows my idea," laughed Polly.

"Whose going to tell him? Not I," retorted Eleanor.

Dodo and Lois soon discovered their friends' secret, however and they agreed to get Dalky, where Polly wished him to be snapped; and then, to give the signal for the picture.

Polly had provided several rolls of film, each roll having twelve exposures, so she felt sure she would have quite a collection before they re-

turned to Cordova at night. So far as snapping Mr. Dalken in desirable places and without his suspicions being roused, the girls fared splendidly. But Polly did not find out until the party got to Juneau that the films were so old and had been damp from many winter seasons of waiting for her to come and buy them, that not one picture proved to register.

The third day of the stay at Cordova, the girls voted to remain in town and refurbish their much-needed wardrobe. Mr. Tainter and Mr. Dalken set off alone that day for a visit to Copper Center, and still farther north, to Gulkana and Paxson. They found they could get over the ground much faster and better without any guests to show about, and that night they returned with all the information they wished for at that time.

At sunset that evening—sunset comes at about ten o'clock—they went aboard the *Atlanta II,* as the vessel had been named when Captain Hall took command of it; and they sailed past great forest reserves, where the mighty trees grew down to the very water's edge. In the gloaming these forests looked more like fairyland than real productions of nature.

The sail from Cordova to Juneau, the next stopping place on the route, was accomplished without haste or concern, since there was a sense of confidence caused by always being able to see the shore with its many interesting scenes; and remembrance of the dreadful experience in crossing the Gulf, faded gradually, from the mind.

Juneau is the capital of Alaska and lays claim to more pretensions than its sister cities. Mr. Dalken proposed remaining on the steamer at night, and going ashore each morning, as they had done during the voyage down the west coast of South America. He thought the ladies would find more comfort by this plan, than in stopping in hotels.

"But you do not expect to stop at Juneau very long, do you?" asked Polly.

"I thought we were going to go on to Skagway and Haines in the morning," added Eleanor.

"And I wanted to take a canoe trip to the glaciers," added Dodo. "Now that we are here, let's see everything worth while."

"If you propose seeing all that's worth while, Dodo, you will have to live the rest of your life on earth in Alaska, and then you will not have

seen a fifth of it," laughed Mrs. Courtney.

"While Dodo 'does' the glaciers in a canoe, I think I will take a side trip down the Yukon and back. The glaciers are visited about as quickly as I can sail the length of the Yukon, you know," teased Mr. Dalken, smilingly.

"Well, yes! that's another thing we ought to do—and you outlined it in your route, Dalky: start from a given point on the Yukon, and sail to St. Michael, or vice versa. Now what has become of your plan?" remarked Polly.

"For one thing, our side trip to that iceberg took the time we might have had for the Yukon. Then, too, I am not keen about adventuring off the beaten track again. I'll follow the safe old trails this season," confessed Mr. Dalken.

"Oh, our being shipwrecked was most unfortunate, but it is not a common thing, you must remember," argued Polly. "A thousand, yes ten thousand, vessels might go that same route and have a pleasant trip. It was just hard luck that we should collide with that giant berg and then get stuck on it."

"Polly! haven't you stopped using such slang?" asked Mrs. Courtney, laughingly. "Getting 'stuck on' anything, is *reel* slang."

"Slang or not, I'm thankful we stuck so long," laughed Mal O'Gowen. "Had the *Atlanta I* not stuck so well we might not be here now."

Numerous trips about Juneau were taken by Polly and her friends, one of the most interesting of them being the trip to Muir Glacier. The tourists had seen the towering peak of the glacier as the boat passed it on the way to Juneau, but it looked at that distance much like Mt. Logan and Mt. St. Elias.

The best way to see one of Alaska's monster glaciers is to paddle in a canoe. Should you be too timid for a canoe, go in a boat upon the lake that is the result of the melting ice and snow of the crags. In Polly's party, some few voted for the canoes, since youth craves thrills and excitement; but the wiser adults vetoed the idea, and insisted upon the safer boats manned by natives.

Consequently, Polly and Eleanor found themselves with Mal and Red, and Mr. Dalken as boss of their skiff, while the others were so grouped as to distribute an equal number in each boat. Polly's boat led the line.

"How different everything looks from a boat, than from the shore," remarked Polly gazing

at the varied scenes along the lake banks.

"Yes, and so will the glacier make its impressive appeal to us from a boat. Had we viewed it from an automobile, or at a distance, we could never realize the force and power in its ice slides which break away in summer and send down so many bergs. Those echoing sounds of artillery, which we heard as we came to port at Juneau, are made by the ice breaking and then striking the water of the lake," explained Mr. Dalken.

As the boats were speeding silently over the water, one of the natives in Polly's boat, understanding a little English, said in broken words: "Um see bik whale oot on islan'? He'em Greenlan' whale much bik."

"No, we heard nothing of it," replied Mr. Dalken. "Which island is it on? We may have time to stop and watch how they cut and prepare whale-products for market."

"Me show right way to Islan', affer Glaze done," mumbled the guide. Then he remained silent for a time.

One of the natives then addressed the guide in Esquimaux, and the guide interpreted for him. "He'em say, um viseet fox grow?"

"Fox grow!" repeated Mr. Dalken, and Polly laughed. She comprehended, and explained.

"Maybe he means fox growers—there are many in Alaska, and I heard Mrs. Courtney say she wanted to buy enough skins to make a fine automobile coat."

"Poll," corrected Eleanor, "she said she would if her letter of credit could be cashed up here. It is a question, whether we can raise enough dust in Juneau to pay for all we want to buy."

"Gold dust is one thing that Juneau can raise," laughed Mal. "If we had all the 'dust' to be had in that little town, we'd take life easy, I'll tell you!"

"Yes," added Red. "Dust is plenteous, but how about our credit?"

"Mr. Tainter established letters of credit before we came here. We are fortunate in being associated with him now, because it would have been rather inconvenient for us all had we been stranded so far from home with no one to guarantee our promises in the bank," said Mr. Dalken.

"Why! I never thought of that!" exclaimed Eleanor. "It never penetrated the bone of my head to ask where were you all getting the cash

to pay for the *Atlanta II,* as well as for our expenses."

"Probably you thought the natives in Alaska were only too happy to see you and entertain you free of all costs," laughed Polly.

Evidently the guide took no interest in this talk, for he reminded them again: "White man raise fox. Me know one good sell fur."

"An eye to business!" whispered Polly to Mr. Dalken, and Eleanor, who overheard the remark, nodded her head.

All further conversation was suddenly ended by a terrific crack, instantly followed by a roar and rumble that sounded like dozens of trains going through a great tunnel.

"A berg! a berg! look at that!" shouted Eleanor, half-standing in her astonishment, as she pointed to the side of the glacier.

She was roughly dragged down to her seat without being aware of it—so absorbed was she in the sight before her. Polly and the others with her were too intent upon watching Nature's wonder to heed anything else.

The guide kept quite close to the shore opposite Muir Glacier, for, he explained to his

passengers, "Ice kick up bik wave when he come down."

In Mr. Dalken's English it was interpreted that should a slide of ice occur during their trip upon the lake, it would be far better for all concerned to keep far from the place where the ice strikes the water. And so it proved now.

Many small cakes of ice had been passed by without causing any comment, but now the berg that had just broken away and had instantly slid down into the lake certainly did "kick up bik wave". The greater portion of it was submerged, however, and only a small peak projected, from the water.

"Me kip far off," commented the guide, nodding his head knowingly.

"I'm glad to hear it," laughed Polly. "We've had one too-close connection with a berg, and that one is quite enough."

Eleanor could not restrain saying: "It was not only a "near-iceberg", which means imitation goods in New York City, but it turned out to be a guaranteed and trade-marked and trust-formed iceberg. Ask Mal for patent papers."

Her friends laughed, as well they might at this late day.

The chill in the atmosphere of the lake failed to chill the interests of the tourists, as the boats slowly passed one after another of the great floes, all on their way down current to find a way out to the sea. Every floe passed was found to be more than two-thirds submerged, only one-third lifting its white point above the surface of the water.

"Dalky, how is it that they overbalance in such a way?" asked Eleanor. "I see a number of ice-cakes that are almost flat, floating by on *top* of the lake."

"If you could prod down under the surface of the lake, Nolla, you'd soon find the cake of ice was not all on the top. In fact, the icebergs balance themselves neatly by keeping the greater part of their weight submerged, even as the ocean liners have more than half of their bulk below the surface of the sea. In old times this law of balance was not understood or followed so wisely as in modern times. This may account for so many disasters at sea, and during the naval battles. In regard to the icebergs, you'll find Nature always did take precautions in a manner that mortals might well study and follow," explained Dalky.

At this moment all thought of balance and Nature was forgotten. A terrific rending of a great solid cake of ice from its parent glacier was instantly followed by a cold wind which was caused by concussion of the mass against the air-waves. As this large area of ice came down from the great height above the lake, it struck projecting crags of ice of the glacier, and literally ripped them off, shooting them down ahead, beside, and behind it in its passage to the lake.

The guides had quickly sent their boats up on shore as far from the actual disturbance as possible. Still there must result a huge tidal wave. As the large berg struck the water, and submerged most of its bulk, the billows thus created came rushing on and on across the lake then reached and rocked the boats so dangerously near to overturning them that several female voices were heard above the detonations made by smaller ice-cakes striking the water. But the able guides were too experienced in every method used against icebergs, and the boats were carefully managed so that each oncoming wave had to lift the human cargo high upon its crest, then drop it down again, to be hoisted again and poised aloft upon its successor. This was thrilling to

the young people, and anything but desirable to the adults.

"Don't miss the grandeur of the sight!" shouted Mal, as he pointed across the water.

This attracted the eyes of every one of the girls to watch the unusual scene. A towering pinnacle of ice was floating serenely on the current of the lake, surrounded by its many adopted children, which were kept close through the power of suction made in the water by the large berg. These smaller floes, however, would rub against each other under water, and this caused them to rock and quiver, and often to break up with a grinding and cracking that sounded as deafening, because of their nearness to the boats, as the greater bergs had.

An opalescent mist in wavering lines and colors of a rainbow hung above the ice floes, and was reflected again in the clear water of the lake. While the eager watchers sat silently watching the giant berg sail majestically on its way across the lake, it was seen that it soon gained in speed and at last the smaller floes were left behind. But the smaller bergs now were drawn into the vortex caused by the monster floe, and soon all were fighting and plunging at each other in the

frothing trail. The smaller ones, in striking their larger opponents for place in line, were tossed up and out of the pathway just as a straw is picked up by the wind and tossed aside.

"The lovely colors all around the ice and upon the lake remind me of the rainbows on the ice-peaks at home," said Polly, "and those fragments of ice with their variegated colors look just like our Rainbow Cliffs at Pebbly Pit."

"I was just thinking the same thing," added Eleanor.

It took more than half an hour for the iceberg procession to pass out of sight, and long before that time had elapsed there were new cracks and crumbles from the glacier, but none so great and impressive as the monster slide witnessed by the tourists that day.

"It's a wonder to me that the whole peak isn't melted and washed away, if great masses of it break off like this in summer," remarked Eleanor, as the boats neared the landing once more.

"Even if the peak did come down, the fearful cold of the arctic winters would soon erect new peaks upon the old foundations," said Mr. Dalken. "And the foundations are so solid that it will take ages of melting, as the climate changes

gradually, from the ice age to the present milder temperature."

True to his word, the guide directed Mr. Dalken to the island where the Greenland whale was to be seen. And Mr. Dalken not only thanked him for the information, but paid the men in the boat so that they blessed him and his for all eternity—in Esquimaux.

CHAPTER X

THE JUNEAU RECEPTION

MANY thrilling experiences during the first few weeks of the Dalken party in Alaska had distracted the younger members in the group, and no one had thought of paying any attention to personal charm or beauty, but courage and fortitude were up for prizes. Thus Polly and Eleanor wasted no time on appearances or engaging the attentions of the young men. Now, however, since arriving in Juneau and being able to secure decent clothing and toilet articles, the natural instinct of woman to appear at her best before admirers, possessed the girls. Then came invitations to attend a reception and ball at the Governor's residence.

Mrs. Courtney had met several representative ladies of Juneau society during her stay in the city, and she advised her friends to appear in the best they had. "They've all heard of our

adventures, and we are the Seven Wonders of the World, so live up to our reputation.

"Supposing our best is as poor as a native's worst?" laughed Bob, glancing at his own and his chum's ready-made clothes.

"Then scout around the town and borrow some Esquimaux's Sunday church clothes," retorted Eleanor.

"If Juneau society had the least regard for our self-respect they would have made this affair a masquerade," sighed Polly.

"That isn't saying it is too late to suggest it," added Mrs. Courtney. "I have been wishing the same thing. Then we wouldn't feel conscious of our appearances, because we are able to plan attractive costumes, I think."

"Tell the ladies whom you know, that we will accept, upon one condition," declared Mr. Dalken: "that they make it a costume or masquerade affair."

"Do, do!" chorused the others, and Mrs. Courtney promised to see what she could do. Therefore she called upon the reception committee during the time Mr. Dalken escorted his young friends to see the Greenland whale, and in the evening she brought back cheering news.

"The ladies hailed my suggestion with pleasure, because they never gave a thought to the fact that we might be apparelly-embarrassed. The word has gone forth: represent a character of history, or one described in a classic. Now what characters do you choose?"

"I know what Mrs. Courtney ought to represent," declared Eleanor, her eyes twinkling.

"Then tell me, because I need to know," smiled the lady.

"Queen of Sheba! She was one of the wisest women in history, you know," retorted Eleanor.

"And Dalky must appear as King Solomon!" laughed Polly.

"And wear a garb that proves he was owner of King Solomon's mines—a famous classic by Rider Haggard," added Mal.

"Not only Solomon's Mines, but Alaskan, Arizona, and South American, as well!" came from Mr. Tainter, who had entered into the plans with youthful zest.

"I am not of a stature capable of carrying such a garb," was Mr. Dalken's meek excuse.

"We'll suit the garb to the man," promised Dodo, laughingly.

"Here! here! have you forgotten the Queen

of Sheba in your efforts to build up a Solomon?" called Red, who was an humble admirer of Mrs. Courtney.

"No, the Queen has already decided on her part, and I'll wager her brain is teeming with ideas for her costume," said Polly.

"Not till I hear about the King. Then I must use all my wits to discover a means of tripping him up in his famed wisdom," laughed Mrs. Courtney. "It must be something more intriguing than imitation flowers, because honey-bees are not a commodity of Alaska, I fancy."

"What is that you're saying about flowers and bees?" asked Mrs. Alexander, her curiosity roused when she thought the lady was referring to some recent escapade on the part of their irreproachable host.

"Why, Maw! Mrs. C—— means that story about the test given with fruit and flowers, you know," explained Dodo.

Now Mrs. Alex. was quite sure the story was one connected with a gift of fruit and flowers sent to some fair dame, and she was all eagerness to hear the gossip. "Tell me, Dodo—I'm dying to hear."

Dodo lifted her eyebrows and turned away,

but Polly, thinking to inform Mrs. Alexander in a kindly way, began:

"I'm sure you've forgotten the legend, Mrs. Alex., about how the Queen brought slaves to the audience hall, carrying great baskets of fruit and flowers as an offering to the King. These were placed before his majesty and he was invited to judge which were the real and which the false flowers and fruit. Both baskets were filled with beautiful selections of fruit and flowers, and the imitation ones were so like Nature's production, that the King as he gazed upon them, was bewildered.

At this point in the tale Bob interrupted, then apologized and added: "The Queen smiled because she had him surely, and she must have counted on the widespread advertising she would get, and it was for that cause she undertook such a long journey, you know: to prove she was wiser of the two rulers. Now tell what *he* did."

"Oh, Bob! why spoil a perfectly good story like that?" was Mal's digusted rebuke.

"Keep still—both of you, and let Poll finish," called Dodo and Lois, impatiently.

"Bob ought to finish, now he started something

on his own account," grumbled Eleanor, glaring at the teasing youth.

"If you'll keep quiet long enough, I'll tell it, or else I will take Mrs. Alex. out of the room and finish the story," threatened Polly.

"But I wouldn't go away, I want to hear it in Dalky's own presence," declared Mrs. Alexander, to every one's wonder.

"Well, Solomon had a brilliant idea. He ordered the slaves to open the windows and this was done. Then the sunshine poured in, and soon a few straggling honey-bees, hovering around the window to inspect a vine-covered trellis which might make a good swarming spot, flew in and began circling around the baskets. It did not take long before they went directly to the one filled with Nature's flowers and fruits, and the Queen had to admit that the King was the most wise."

"Why, Polly! is that all there is to it?" demanded Mrs. Alexander with such a disappointed expression that Polly felt perplexed.

"What did you expect to hear, Mrs. Alex.?" asked she.

"Well, when you hinted at Mr. Dalken not being likely to find honey-bees in Alaska, even if

he did have flowers, I thought, perhaps—why, I knew there was *one* lady who would be only too happy to accept his flowers, if only——" Mrs. Alexander got no further, because Dodo began laughing so loudly just then, and called attention to a ridiculous idea she had just thought of. Without waiting for the others to ask about it, she began to explain exactly what she pictured as a costume for Polly and one of the boys. Thus Mrs. Alexander's possible breach of etiquette was nipped in its bud.

"But, Dodo," argued Polly, after hearing about the character her friend had in mind for her, "why not follow that idea for yourself and your admirer. I have my costume planned, but no one is going to get the first word about it. It is to be a state secret."

"Polly! You wouldn't keep me in sublime ignorance of it, would you?" demanded Eleanor.

"I said *every* one! That includes you and Dalky and Mrs. C——," retorted Polly, wagging her head emphatically.

"All right for you, Poll! Then I shall not breathe one word about my costume, either!" snapped Eleanor, just as positive as her chum had been.

"It may prove more entertaining if each one keeps his or her masque secret from the others; then we shall enjoy the fun all the more," suggested Mr. Tainter.

"That's a good idea. Let's agree to follow that plan," added Mrs. Courtney, and the majority agreed.

Their visit in Juneau had to be extended for several days, so that they might be on hand for the reception and ball. But that did not interfere with many side trips to one place or the other, nor did these trips interfere with the work of preparing the costumes for the masque. The plan to keep each one's character a secret from the others in the Dalken party proved more interesting than talking over dresses and sharing with each other the details of preparations.

Then came the lovely evening when every American living within possible traveling distance of Juneau came to town to the ball.

It was suspected by all in the Dalken party that the three chums, Mal O'Gowen, Red and Bob had plotted to appear at the masque, as the "Three Musketeers," because they certainly conferred with each other whenever a private moment could be found, and the giggles and

quick warnings when any one else approached them, were enough to prove to the girls that they had combined forces.

To avoid being discovered by each other, when the masqueraders were leaving their rooms at the hotel, necessitated clever dodges and many manœuvres. Once one was out of the corridor of his or her room, it was not important to keep out of sight of the others. However every one had to be silent on the way to the Governer's Mansion, for by his voice, he would have been identified.

Eyes gleamed through the masks, as a few of the girls waited about in their enveloping cloaks to see the three boys—Three Musketeers, as they were called. But no sign of any of the boys repaid the watchful waiting in the lobby. Then came a signal to go out to the automobiles, and those that had assembled in the main hall hurried out. There had been a great number of visitors registered at the hotel that day, as well as American tourists besides the Dalken party, and all were invited to the ball. Therefore the girls were not sure just who it was that got into a motor—whether it was some one they knew, or a stranger in a mask.

The grand march was one of the gayest and

most interesting scenes Polly and her chums ever witnessed. The girls had arrived long before the opening dance, and they sat gazing eagerly about to try to detect their friends. There was little difficulty in placing Mrs. Adair and Mrs. Alexander, because they came in black dominoes with black lace face veils; but it was another matter to find out who was who in the assemblage of costumed guests.

In the heart and mind of every young member in the Dalken party it was decided that Dalky really did follow the idea of dressing as King Solomon, and strange to say, Mrs. Courtney must have done likewise and dressed as the Queen of Sheba, because there they were—plain as day! But there also was a character famous enough in fiction and history—Cupid. This sly Cupid kept trailing Solomon and the Queen everywhere, and at every opportunity he would send one of his shafts at his victims—the King and Queen.

Polly would have given much just then to have assured herself that this Cupid was really Eleanor. She had heard her friend laugh immoderately when asked what she was going to represent; and it was just like Nolla to dress in

flesh-colored tights and drape a wonderful piece of Russian gold brocade, entwined with flowers, about her form, and fasten paper wings covered with feathers upon her back. Still, the actions of Cupid, and the ungainly walk and carriage, were not those of her graceful, sprightly friend, Eleanor.

Polly saw many faces turned upon her, too. And she knew all were trying to pierce her mask and find out just who she was. Her costume was entirely home-made, but it was one of the most attractive present. In fact, Polly won one of the three prizes bestowed for novel and appropriate character costumes.

She had been able to secure enough yellow silk, though old and shop-worn, for a foundation. Upon this foundation she sewed nuggets of gleaming gold; but they were nuggets made of crushed paper and carefully covered with gilding ink, a bottle of which she discovered in a hit-and-miss shop while browsing around for suitable materials. She had used nuggets of every size, and it was a simple matter to sew the crushed paper upon the silk. Her cap was in the form of Columbia's helmet, but it was made of cardboard and gilded. But to secure gold slippers? She

resorted to ingenuity, and covered an old pair of satin slippers, loaned her by one of the ladies, with yellow silk, and then gilded them.

Polly's erect carriage and her supple motions, as she marched and danced, soon told her friends what she represented. And the other two girls, Lois and Dodo, hurried over to laughingly greet her. All three girls could not be sure about Eleanor, however. She had disguised herself too well, and she managed to keep entirely away from her chums.

"It's plain who the King and Queen are," remarked Lois.

"Yes; I'm disappointed, too, because I had expected something wonderful from Mrs. C——," said Dodo.

"You two girls look awfully nice," commented Polly.

"We couldn't find any material in the town for anything we wanted to make," explained Dodo. She represented a pink rose, and her dress was made of crêpe paper petals, with a cap of smaller petals.

Lois represented Peter Pan, but she had not succeeded so well as Polly in finding suitable material for the part. Therefore she could have

passed as the Pied Piper, or any other character that carries a pipe.

"Polly, who do you thing those three totems can be?" now asked Dodo, nodding in the direction of the striking characters.

"Well, I am convinced that they are the three boys—Mal, Bob and Red. Just watch their walk and actions," responded Polly.

"That funny totem with the widespread wings takes up so much room that it cannot dance. Poor boy—if that is one of them," laughed Dodo.

"But you must confess it is a splendid copy of the big totem we saw at Seward," added Lois.

"I like that other totem best—the tall one with the strange parrot-like beak on the top bird, and the gaping jaws of the dog for a base. I wonder how the one inside that narrow, stiff armor can walk, or use his hands. I suppose the arms are sheathed in those funny wings which are outspread, for they flap and fold down or up, I see." Polly's gaze followed this grotesque totem around, and her companions assured her that the three totems really were the three boys, because no other three characters were found always together.

The third totem in this group represented the guardian spirit of Sitka, a totem beautifully colored and carved. How the costume totems were made, Polly could not guess, because she could not get near enough to handle the close-fitting armor.

"Look, Poll! There goes that seal I told you about! Isn't it wonderful? A *real,* sleek seal-skin with fins and all—but who can be inside it?" laughed Dodo.

"I'd like to have the skin," remarked Lois.

"So say we all," laughed Polly. "It's one of the finest."

There were so many unusual characters represented that the girls felt uncertain of their former judgments about their own friends, and one after another of them accepted invitations to dance with those whom they felt sure were the members of their party, and then they ended by feeling just as uncertain.

The merriment continued without abatement for more than an hour, and then the discomfort of the heavy garbs, or the fur and sheath-like costumes, caused the Governor to call for unmasking sooner than had first been planned. This did not mean that every one had to change

costume, or their character, but it afforded those in inconvenient masks an opportunity to change into evening dress.

Before unmasking, however, prizes were awarded. And the Governor bestowed them upon three. The first was given to a character representing "The Silver Horde," a popular novel in which Alaska's fisheries figure in a plot. The costume was of a silvery cloth of scales which the Esquimaux weave and sell to collectors, and scattered over this cloth were tiny little salmon made of papier-mâché. How the individual inside that costume ever got those fish was a mystery to every one that admired it.

The first prize was a great nugget of almost pure copper, symbolic of one of Alaska's chief industries. The Governor said: "It is fitting for this first prize to go to one who wears another one of Alaska's great industries, and the committee wishes the wearer's continued interest in our land, which the costume tells us is already awakened."

The prize-winner seemed reluctant to go forward and accept the prize, but the unanimous chorus of "Unmask! Unmask!" made it necessary for immediate action; and the Silver

Horde hurried to the dais where the Governor stood, and bowed as the prize was extended. The weight of the nugget had not been figured on, and the Governor never dreamed that the wearer of the costume might be a lady. Hence the copper fell through the extended hands and crashed upon the floor.

A laugh circled the room, and the Governor exclaimed "Did you think it was papier-mâché, even as the fish are, my friend."

"Unmask! Unmask!" began the impatient watchers. And then a slender hand came from the painted scales of silver cloth, and the pink mask was lifted.

Every one in the room, including Mr. Dalken, was surprised to see Mrs. Courtney smile and bow again to the Governor. And he, poor man, caught his breath, and apologized for handing her such a burden as the copper ore. Applause and laughter filled the room, and Polly ran up to congratulate her chaperon on the excellent disguise.

"But who is the Queen of Sheba?" demanded Polly, as she escorted Mrs. Courtney to a seat.

"That's what I want to know," laughed Mrs. Courtney. It goes without saying that Dalky is

King Solomon, because he was sure I was going as Queen of Sheba."

"Who do you suppose the Cupid is?" asked Dodo.

"Who else but Nolla," insisted Polly.

The winner of the second prize brought applause from the Dalken party, when Polly unmasked and it was found that she was not a fish, or a fowl, or anything more than flesh and blood, youth and beauty dressed in gold.

Her prize was appropriate, too, for it was a small nugget of gold ore produced in the Klondike.

Then the third prize was announced, and an explanation became necessary from the Governor.

"We have decided that the Totems of Alaska are the next best characters, and so we present the prize to the three young men of Mr. Dalken's party. I do not wish any one present to feel that we have shown partiality to these visitors, because we were not aware that the two ladies masked, one in silver and one in gold, belonged to that party. Though we did suspect that the three Totems were the young men just spoken of. It will be their duty to divide the prize in some

way. The third prize was then awarded and a bushel of coal was placed upon the dais.

The laughter that filled the room at sight of the third prize prevented any one from hearing the Governor's speech, and his advice to count the nuggets honestly that each young man might share alike.

"Unmask!" sounded from the circle of curious faces, and to the astonishment of all who knew Mal, Bob and Red, it was discovered that not one of the three boys represented a Totem.

"Well!" gasped the Governor, having the second shock of the evening before him, "if you are not the three boys in the Dalken party who are you?"

Then came the surprise to Polly. "Maybe my chum and Dalky can identify me," laughed a choking voice from the mask of the dog-parrot.

"Are you a girl?" exclaimed the Governor, leaning over to peer at the crimson face and tousled hair of Eleanor.

"I'm a Totem!" retorted she, creating a general laugh.

"Who are your friends?" now asked the Governor, turning to the other two Totems.

Eleanor also turned at the words, and gave a shout of merriment.

"Oh, Jenks and Allen—I never dreamed of you doing this!" was her cry of identification.

"It's lucky we won the prize of coal, Miss Nolla," replied Jenks, laughingly. "Now we have enough fuel to carry us back home."

The story of the castaways had become popular history in port, and the remark made by Jenks caused every one to join the laugh.

"After this surprise, I feel I must demand certain characters present to step up as they are called and prove who they may be. We are all at sea on our guessing to-night," announced the Governor, and the clapping proved he had voiced the wishes of all the guests.

King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba were called up first, after the coal had been removed from the dais. Cupid pranced directly after them, and when the masks were taken away Polly was confounded to see Mal, Bob and Red gazing at the amazed faces. But where was Dalky? And where was Mr. Tainter in his mask?

The Governor called upon the most noticeable

characters to reveal their identity. Still he failed to find the two financiers.

In desperation he finally shouted out: "Will Mr. Dalken and Mr. Tainter, my guests of honor for the evening, come forward."

Every voice was hushed, and every eye tried to single out the two much-talked-of men. When two dirty, poorly clad miners, carrying the old-time oil lamp in their caps, slouched down the room, all voices joined in one loud laugh. The black-streaked hands of the miners, the old worn shoes from which red socks peeped, and the old flannel shirts with dirty bandannas tied about the necks, had fooled every one.

"It's too bad we donated the coal prize to the Totems," joked the Governor. "The poor coal-miners are entitled to their yield, at least."

Mr. Dalken retorted: "I find the very labor of carrying this garb, to say nothing of what it stands for in the need of coal in the world, has made me think seriously of improving the coal miners' conditions. I propose to stand and auction off this uniform, and donate the proceeds for club rooms, within a certain area around Juneau for the coal miners.

It may be thought that the character costume

failed to bring enough to buy one set of books for the library of the club room; but bidding ran high, as Mr. Tainter and Mrs. Courtney tried to secure Dalkey's old miner's garb, and at last Mrs. Courtney outbid her adversary. Again when Mr. Tainter stood up to auction off his outfit, he hinted that the pockets contained a grab-bag of some value. He could not be cajoled into divulging what would be found inside the coat pockets, but a majority of those present joined in the gamble and bid ridiculous sums for possession of the outfit. Mr. Dalken bid by leaps and bounds, since it was in a good cause, and he finally outbid all competitors, and took the clothes.

"Show the pockets! What did you win?" sounded from all sides. And the Governor requested Mr. Dalken to stand upon the dais and display the contents of the pockets.

Several packets were removed, and, to the astonishment of every one but those few that knew the facts, the lost jewelery which had been left on board the *Atlanta* was spread out upon the table. Even the boys and sailors from the raft that had been cast away on the unknown

island wondered how those trinkets ever came to be in that place at that time.

"Thereby hangs a 'tail,' friends," explained the Governor. "I received these trinkets from a friend living in Sitka. He received them from a native fishing crew, which had stopped at the island just vacated by the famous castaways to fill their bags with water from the spring which they knew to exist on the island.

"While waiting for a few of the men to return with the water bags, the guide in the long boat thought he saw something gleaming under the waves. Being a man of action, he threw off his upper clothing and went down for the objects. He brought up two soaked packets, tied by twine and secured together, but from the end of one of the packets a fish or shell had frayed the cloth and exposed the gold within.

"The guide had heard of the castaways and how the raft had capsized just as they had reached safety, and he stopped at Sitka on his way back home, to explain, and to leave the valuables to be delivered to their rightful owners.

"This native honesty inspired me to give a reception, and let all tourists present to-night hear how our Esquimaux treat other persons'

property. No thought of reward or graft enters their conscientious minds, and they will go out of their way, as did this man, to right anything which seems wrong, or troubles others.

CHAPTER XI

DESERTED BEAUTIES

THE Dalken party felt a keen regret at saying good-by to the hospitable citizens of Juneau, but they had other stops to make before turning their faces homeward, and the season was passing rapidly. Captain Hall had heard often, during his stop-overs at the different ports of Alaska, that the most charming time of the year to visit interior Alaska was during September. Contrary to all reports, the climate is as moderate and fairer than in the summer months. There is no rainy season then, and winter has not yet sent her advance guard of snow and cold from the North Pole.

"If this is true, we need not hasten away without having that Yukon trip," remarked Mr. Dalken.

"But you ought to decide upon it without more delay," suggested Mr. Tainter. "There is noth-

ing to call me back to the States until I wish to go, but how about you and your friends?"

"Oh, we are free to go and come as we will. The one thing that would need my attention would be the letters which may come from my expedition to the interior in South America. Yet there are my experienced associates in business, and those who accompanied the adventurers, who can advise and command in my absence, to prevent any possible failures coming from several of many unforeseen conditions," explained Mr. Dalken.

"Well, then, after visiting Sitka, suppose we broach the subject of going down the Yukon," said Mr. Tainter.

Thus agreed, the two men went out to find the other members of their party, and to watch the *Atlanta II* as she came to anchor at the wharf of Sitka.

The harbor in which the tourists found their vessel come to rest is as beautiful as a vision of Eden. The dots of islands in the clear water, reflect their flowering faces and reproduce pictures that remind one of sunken gardens in fairy tales. The peak of old Mt. Edgecombe watches over the town like a hen over her chicks. Not

a century ago this peak was a live volcano, now it is covered with rugged, brown growth, very different from the snow-clad peaks farther north.

Sitka is one of the oldest Russian settlements on record. Baranov ruled here for forty years under the Russian government, and his castle site is one of the points of interest to visit in Sitka. It is now a government house belonging to the United States.

The girls took pictures of the old wharves which remain, even though modernism has come to the town to stay. There are numerous ancient places, and many historic spots remaining, in and about Sitka, to offset any extremes of modern improvements. Some of the citizens are descendants of the original Russian families, and Indians associate with white settlers there without regard to race or color.

The tourists, with Polly as guide, visited the Sheldon Jackson Museum, where interesting Alaskan relics were to be seen. It was told how President Harding had visited the Museum and how he had enjoyed seeing the wonderful exhibits of native craftmanship.

Another day Polly and the girls, accompanied by Mr. Dalken and Mrs. Courtney, went to the

old Greek Catholic Cathedral of St. Michael. They saw the rare old paintings, and were treated to a peep at fine carved crucifixes, many set with rare gems. They were told that far back in history Peter the Great and members of the royal family contributed to this collection of wonderful objects.

Sitka kept the tourists three days, and then the *Atlanta II* steamed away to round Baronoff Island and turn in at the narrows that divide Prince of Wales Island from Baronoff. The Captain was told to sail to Wrangell, where Mr. Tainter wished to visit the fisheries and compare them with those of Sitka. This was one of the duties he had to perform in Alaska, because the salmon fisheries are such an important interest that financing a great undertaking may be successful or ruined by overlooking any issue in the country.

The loveliness of the trip between the islands along the course to Wrangell claimed the attention of the tourists, and many a splendid snapshot Polly got on that sail: of verdure-clad mountains, rearing great heights from the water's edge; of varied-colored flowers blooming in greatest profusion and reflecting their lovely

rose, lilac and yellow shades in the clear water; of the substantially built but small homes in groups, or scattered far and wide along the shores; and as a fitting overtone to all this beauty, the haze which radiates upon land and sea, like a halo above the heads of the saints.

Nearing Wrangell Island, the Captain joined his friends and pointed out different places of interest: a saltery for the salmon, the large area devoted to making cases for shipping the fish, the canning plant, and many others.

"One would think, to look at the extent of the plant, that Wrangell is the only place where fish are packed and shipped," said Polly, meditatively.

"Well, when millions of cases of salmon, each holding an average of fifty pounds of fish are sent out to consumers, you will understand that Wrangell is not large enough to attend to all that enormous trade."

The *Atlanta II* docked at the wharf of Wrangell, and Polly gazed with curiosity at a picturesque blockhouse on a hill which seemed to stand guard over the town. Glimpses of the Indian settlement were had, where the totem poles showed distinctly that our decorators could

find interesting examples for their collection.

Comfortable quarters were first found for the time being, because Mr. Dalken said they would find ample time to live in the compact quarters of the vessel for days to come. Then they prepared to visit the canneries. Chinamen were employed in packing the fish, and the girls watched the speed with which the workers did their tasks.

"I never thought a salmon was so large," remarked Dodo.

"These are silver salmon, and they weigh from five to nine pounds, as a rule," explained the overseer of the place. "You see, they are bluish-green, like the color of the sea, and their silver sides are not spotted, as are those of other species of the fish. For some unknown reason, they horde better in the waters of this section of Alaska than farther north or south."

The visitors then followed their guide to the different places where the fish are brought and prepared. "This is the reception room," explained the overseer. "Now watch that scow just unloading—see the fish thrown from the hold to the lattice-work flooring, to let the

surplus water drain off before loading them upon the trucks.

"If we follow that truck filled with salmon, we'll find it stop at the place where the next step in the process of canning is taken. That is the cleaners' job."

The tourists then followed the man to the cleaners' shed, and watched while the fish were beheaded, scraped, washed and cut up.

"Now, we will see the next process in this industry," said the guide, taking his visitors to the building where the salmon are packed in tin cans. Then the cans are soldered, placed upon steam racks, and after a time, taken out and tested, then vented.

They watched the interesting work, and saw the very load of fish that had first been loaded upon a truck, steamed for a second time, had its cans resoldered and sent to the lacquering room, then labelled and packed in cases.

"Why do those men tap every can that passes them on its way to the packing-room?" asked Eleanor.

"They are experts; and they know by sound if the can is absolutely air-tight. If the slightest degree of air gets into a can, its contents are

spoiled for market. This causes combustion, and the bursting of one can often blows holes into the neighboring cans in the case. You can see that that would be ruinous in trade so these expert testers immediately send back a defective can."

When the visitors had seen all that was of interest in the silver salmon cannery, the overseer suggested that they go and see the red salmon cannery, which uses machinery and interesting methods in packing the fish.

"Red salmon are caught hundreds of miles in the up-streams and in inland lakes, where they go for the summer. Sometimes the salmon will travel from a thousand to two thousand miles without feeding, until the spawning season," explained the guide.

"I've heard that they die after spawning—is this the law of Nature?" asked Mr. Tainter.

"I do not think so, because experts declare that they die from sheer exhaustion of the long journey without food. As soon as they spawn they are so weak that they cannot seek food, and they really perish from famine," explained the overseer.

A few days later, the Dalken party on the

wharf of Juneau, bid Captain Hall a temporary farewell, and watched him go aboard the *Atlanta II* for his trip to St. Michaels, where he would await his passengers and resume the sail southwards for Seattle. The tourists planned to start from Whitehorse, some miles northwest of Skagway, and follow the course of the great arctic stream until it empties at last into the Arctic Ocean.

Thus far, during the entire tour from San Francisco to the present time, Polly had not paid much attention to the admiration from the young men in the party. Now and then, one or the other of the four boys, to say nothing of Jenks and Allen, seemed partial to her mental and physical charms, then again he seemed to waver and pay court to Eleanor or one of the other girls. Still, Polly had the preference, if the truth were told. But she laughed at all preferences.

"The only trouble with you boys is this: you had to endure such nervous strains during our castaway experience that it weakened your hearts. That's why they are so soft and susceptible."

Her hearers laughed merrily at this diagnosis of the boys' complaint of heart trouble, and the young men themselves laughed, but not so

merrily. It was not certain whether one or all of them felt concerned over Polly's evident nonchalance.

With the *Atlanta II* passing from sight, Mr. Dalken ordered his party to the craft which would carry them via the Lynn Canal—one of the most beautiful inland trips in Alaska—to Skagway. From that town, they would follow the route to White Pass, then to Atlin, and so on down the Yukon to Dawson.

Having spent the night in Skagway, the tourists started by train to Whitehorse City, where the fine, comfortable steamers leave for the wonderful trips on the Yukon.

Soon after finding desirable seats beside the windows of the car, Polly and her friends took note of fellow passengers. The boys had excused themselves to look for a smoking car where they might enjoy a cigarette—a luxury they had been deprived of for many a long day. Polly declared that she would *not* pardon them for falling back into nicotine habits, after having been severely cured of smoking for weeks past. But the boys grinned sheepishly, nudged each other in the sides, and broke away from the party to go up ahead.

"We won't look at them again, and that will teach them a lesson!" exclaimed Eleanor, pouting.

"We ought to hunt up other escorts," suggested Dodo, as she stood up and sought over the rows of seats for possible beaux.

"I saw two young men getting on the car just back of this one," hinted Lois, eagerly.

"What are two among four girls!" sighed Eleanor, and Polly replied:

"Half a loaf is better than none. How can we manage to meet these strangers?"

"Let's tell Dalky, and ask him to arrange it—just to show our boys that we won't be deserted for a puny cigarette," was Dodo's plan.

"Dalky—come over here!" instantly called Eleanor, and her imperative call was quickly obeyed. When he had managed to squeeze in beside Polly and Dodo, all four girls began at once. Poor man! He held up both hands to show he was defeated in the first round, and his charges laughed. Then Eleanor became self-appointed spokesman.

"Dalky, those four wretches have deserted us, and for what? For *cigarettes!* Just when we wanted them to tell us all about the wonderful

places we pass by on this trip," declared Eleanor.

"Why, how dreadful of them! How *could* they commit such a crime?" laughed Mr. Dalken.

"It's no laughing matter, we tell you," added Dodo. "We saw some nice young men board the train, and we want you to go and introduce yourself, or have the conductor do it." Then you explain that you have a little party in the car ahead, but there are no agreeable youths to entertain the charming girls you have charge of—see?" said Eleanor.

Mr. Dalken's laugh now reached the passengers, even at the extreme rear end of the car, and sympathetic smiles came to their lips.

"Suppose the four boys get back before I do—and the drafted braves come with me and find the garrison taken?" said he.

"Never fear! I just know those wayward youths are having a game of cards in there, as well as smoking their lives away. I saw Mal buy a deck of cards at the shop in Skagway," retorted Dodo.

"All right—here goes the ambassador," agreed Mr. Dalken.

Without a word of explanation to the other friends in his party, the host went down the car

and out of the rear door. The girls craned their necks while watching him enter the next car, and soon they grinned and exchanged looks, because they could see their staunch friend and ally stop at one of the seats and enter into conversation with some one, but the girls could not see who the individuals were.

They waited. Dalky did not return at once, as they thought he would. Meanwhile the train glided along its way, and it had entered the Skagway River Valley, with its flower-strewn floor, before any one seemed to be impressed by the ambassador of Beauty in Distress. After waiting impatiently for a time, the captivating views from the windows drew the attention of the girls and their recent lament was forgotten.

Great mountains towering above, blossom-studded grass in the bottoms, and spreading out like a beautiful carpet over fields and on the banks of streams, then rugged rocky passes, and water falling from clefts in gorges, or from heights which seemed to reach to the sky, absorbed all minds.

"Oh! just see where we are going!" cried Lois, clutching Dodo's arm in her nervous apprehension.

Almost before the girls could look ahead, the train reached a pass where the rails ran on the verge of a great cliff—hundreds of feet rising sheer on the one side, and dark depths of a chasm on the other. The train swung around a curve that seemed to send all off into space, but even while breaths were caught in hisses of dread the curve was left behind, and the going was straight ahead again.

Still the ambassador came not, and the girls were voting to send Mr. Tainter after him, when another awe-inspiring scene drove plotting out of their heads. At the time of agreeing to send a scout for Dalky, they were passing through a dark cleft, but suddenly the train whirled them out into daylight again, and then, before any one could close eyes, the cars were crossing a very high structure that bridged the raging river, in a deep gorge, its precipitous sides covered with jagged rocks.

The train passed the Brackett Wagon Road, which used to lead to White Pass City, in the old stampede days, then reached Rocky Point—or Porcupine Hill—whence, looking back to the valley below, one has a marvelous view of the scene stretching as far as Skagway.

A little farther on the train passed "hanging rocks" and beyond these are the Pitch Fork Falls. Opposite, on the other side of the valley, one sees Bridal Veil Falls,—scenes of rare beauty.

Before the train reached Glacier Gorge, where the tracks run along the cliff over a thousand feet high, Mr. Dalken returned, followed by two young men. The girls were deeply absorbed in gazing from the windows, so they were not aware that their ambassador had succeeded in his quest. The first time they knew that he had come back was when he spoke.

"Polly, I met these Californians on the train, and I thought you girls might like to know them. It is pleasanter to travel in parties than alone, I think. Mr. Barton and Mr. Smith think so too."

The four girls turned quickly, and smiled in pretended surprise at seeing strangers with Mr. Dalken. But the smiles faded as the girls saw the two young men. One was so tall and thin that he threatened to snap in two at every movement. The other one was so small and fat that he could hardly waddle after his friend. Truly a "Mutt and Jeff" pair. Mr. Dalken remained with the young people, and Polly was glad he

did. She was not favorably impressed with the new acquaintances, though they wore the latest cuts in clothes and the prevailing style of collars. How Dodo or the other girls could say they were handsome boys had to be discovered!

Nearing the range called Sawtooth Mountains, the girls were called by Mrs. Courtney to watch the panorama of scenery unrolling its marvels before their eyes. And the girls really wanted to watch, but the new acquaintances from the other car had no use for scenery. They preferred charming girls.

Then came a tunnel which was not long but quite dark. In the short period of time necessary to pass through this dark spot, Mr. Barton made the most of his short acquaintance with Dodo. She felt an arm slip above her shoulders, and then fall upon her neck. At the same time she tried to squirm from under the pressure of that arm, but she was so crowded in the seat with Lois—and the young man sat upon the arm and leaned far over her—she could not throw off that embracing arm without attracting the attention of the others.

"Say, Dalky, how about sending Mr. Barton

for the other boys ahead?" asked Dodo, in desperation.

"How would he recognize them—I had better go myself," replied Mr. Dalken. Without waiting for an answer he left the girls.

Now the train came out of the tunnel and Mr. Barton had removed his arm. He continued in loud conversation with the other girls, however, and they had no idea that he had annoyed Dodo.

Mr. Smith said nothing at all. He leaned upon the seat beside Polly and kept his eyes on her face; he seemed completely hypnotized by her attractions, and he made no effort to disguise it.

Just before reaching the summit of the range which the train crosses, the cars passed over a cantilever bridge more than two hundred feet high. A rushing torrent pours its volume of water through the bottom of the chasm.

"Oh, girls! just look at that spidery crossing—we have to cross it!" cried Lois, leaning out of the window in order to see in advance of the the train.

Dodo half-rose and tried to lean over Lois, to look at the awe-inspiring sight, and Mr. Barton leaned over Dodo, pretending to be absorbed in seeing the bridge, too. But he leaned

upon Dodo's shoulder too heavily to please her, and she really managed to slip aside suddenly.

Not being prepared for this reception of his attentions, the young man came down heavily upon the seat, his feet sliding from under their uncertain position on the floor. Dodo sat upon Eleanor's lap, and Eleanor, in the opposite car-seat, understood immediately that something was under way.

"Why, Mr. Barton! I had no idea you were an acrobat!" laughed she, while the confused young man stumbled and struggled to stand up.

"I suppose it was the sudden swing of the train around that curve," explained he, looking to see if any one suspected the truth.

"That curve was so far back that you would have had to be dreadfully slow to have felt the swing now. We girls are not so slow, you see," retorted Dodo.

Mr. Tainter and the ladies were seated at the opposite side of the car, and they were engaged in watching the scenes of varying beauty—lakes shimmering in the sunshine; mountain streams coming from the peaks or winding a way through flower-decked valleys—and here and there catching glimpses of silver lakes and ice-cragged

ranges. Therefore they paid no attention to the young people.

Just before reaching Lake Bennett, along the shores of which the track stretches twenty-seven miles, the boys returned from the forward car. They seemed surprised to find two strangers in such familiar conversation with the four girls, and after being introduced by Mr. Dalken they stood back silently, permitting the usurpers to remain in possession.

"We're nearing Bennett, where the train stops for lunch," remarked Mal, to no one in particular and all in general.

"Yes, so I was just saying," returned Mr. Barton.

"Yeh," murmured Mal. Then he turned his attention to Mrs. Courtney. Sitting down beside her, he asked in a whisper: "Where under the sun did those chaps come from?"

Mrs. Courtney glanced across the aisle, and whispered in reply: "Dalky brought them in to meet the girls. That's all we know."

"Well, I don't like the looks of either of them!" snapped Mal, with annoyance.

"Better tell them so. I'm sure they will thank you for the information," laughed Mrs. Adair.

"Thank goodness, we are at a stopping place. Then I will fix it so they can't corner all the girls at once," declared Bob.

The other two boys stood about in the aisle, hands in their pockets, not knowing what to do with themselves, or where to sit, since all the seats near their own party were now occupied.

Then the conductor called out "Bennett! Bennett!"

CHAPTER XII

POLLY'S NEW ADMIRER

In spite of clever manœuvring by the four deserters, the two new acquaintances managed so adroitly that they captured the best table and a ready waiter for the luncheon served at Bennett. Mrs. Courtney was included in the party, and that just filled the number of chairs about the table that Mr. Barton had secured. The Deserters, as the girls now dubbed the four boys, had to find other accommodations for the older ladies and themselves and Mr. Tainter.

Though Dodo did not approve of the advanced methods of flirting that Mr. Barton practiced in dark tunnels, she appreciated his agility and cleverness in managing such a matter as getting the best table with the ready service in a crowded lunch room as that was at Bennett that day.

Mr. Smith had remained so dumb since his

introduction to the girls, and now, upon meeting Mrs. Courtney, he bowed with obsequious politeness, but merely murmured his pleasure, so that it began to make the girls think he was shy and completely confused in meeting young ladies. His shyness did not hinder his appetite from being quickly satisfied, however, soon after he had seated himself at the table with his friends.

It happened that Mr. Smith sat next to Polly—Mrs. Courtney being on his other side. Even as he had not removed his gaze from the girl from the time he had first met her until the train stopped at Bennett, so now he kept his eyes fixed upon two objects—his plate first, and then his neighbor's face. The moment he had his mouth filled with food, he shifted his glance from the plate to the girl.

Polly could stand it no longer, and she turned directly to face him and asked: "What is the matter with me, Mr. Smith. Do I remind you of a ghost?"

The young man's mouth being too full for utterance just then, he shook his head emphatically, and tried to explain by using his hands. This attracted the attention of Eleanor and Dodo.

"What's he doing? Demonstrating a funny story?" asked Dodo.

"No, he's only trying to tell me what is wrong with my face," laughed Polly.

The general laugh of those at the table sent poor Mr. Smith into such a state of confusion that Mrs. Courtney felt sorry for him. So she tried to engage his conversational gifts in her behalf. But she found this a more difficult task than she had thought possible.

Polly's new admirer finished eating long before his fellow travelers, and he sat back as though at peace with the world and himself, but never swerving in his concentrated gaze at Polly, and answering all direct questions put to him by a nod of his head for the affirmative, and a shake of his head for a negative reply. Not a word said he.

"I *know* he is dumb now," whispered Dodo to Eleanor.

"Maybe he has such poor teeth that they embarrass him," suggested Eleanor, creating a laugh from Dodo.

"Then we ought to befriend him and advise the tooth-paste which is so widely advertised as making you beautiful by keeping such wonder-

ful teeth in your mouth throughout life on earth," giggled Lois, who had overheard the remark.

"Well, he may not have the gift of golden speech, but he sure has the talent of staring Polly out of her wits. I never saw her so uncomfortable before," said Dodo.

"If he continues to stare in this way, he will cause her to have a brain-storm. Then he'd best find safety first!" giggled Eleanor.

But the luncheon ended without the storm which had been predicted, and the Dalken party returned to the train, the four boys determined to hold seats for the girls, thus crowding out the two newcomers upon the scene.

Here again young Barton proved his agility and nerve by refusing to step aside to give the other boys an opportunity to gain possession of any of the double seats. The four boys, being too polite to dispute with him, merely chose the nearest seats and left Barton in command of the situation. But they determined to "fix him" later.

Mr. Dalken had decided to spend the night at Carcross—known better in the gold-rush days as "Caribou Crossing." Here the rooms were comfortable and the meals excellent, and the in-

teresting points to be visited by the tourists would have taken twice the time they had allowed themselves. Therefore a number of the noted places had to be given up. The next day the journey by rail brought the tourists to Whitehorse, whence the steamers of White Pass and Yukon Route would take them to Dawson.

The train ride from Caribou to Whitehorse became tiresome to Polly before the day ended, because she found her admirer constantly on duty with his gaze, but with never a word to say. The girls began to enjoy the situation, since a dumb beau was a novelty. Hitherto Polly had inspired her beaux to efforts in oratory and poesy—this was a diversion from the general rule.

Mr. Barton also was ever ready to favor the girls—it mattered little to him which one it was—with fervid glances of admiration, or friendly little tokens of regard, such as a sly pat upon the cheek, or a chuck under the chin. He even went so far as to hold hands one moment, when Lois left her hand unconsciously resting upon the arm of the seat. But that hold was not long enough to think about—Mr. Barton found his clasp quickly resented.

During the day the four boys in the original

party tried various dodges and beguilements to force the two new-comers from their posts with the girls, but neither Barton nor Smith would take a hint. So the time passed, and at last the travelers arrived in Whitehorse. Long before they neared Whitehorse, however, the girls were more than sorry they had entertained any plans of substituting the young men, Barton and Smith, for tried and trusty friends such as Mal, Bob, Red and Corney had proved themselves to be under the severest tests. The girls would not admit this fact to any but between themselves.

Then, strange to say, the two new acquaintances disappeared over night, and there was not a sign from them, or a word of what had happened.

"I'm so thankful that those baby-blue eyes are not haunting me any more, that I don't care where the owner is," sighed Polly.

"Better knock on wood, Polly," teased Mr. Dalken. "He may pop up at any moment."

"Not he," retorted Eleanor. "He hasn't enough pep to do a thing for himself but eat and stare."

"How can you expect him to have any am-

bition, Nolla, when his bosom companion has enough for ten," said Dodo.

"Well, at least you have a right to hear the sound of his voice, so long as he fastens himself to your party," complained Lois.

The time between leaving the train at Whitehorse and going on board the steamer bound for Dawson was so crowded with places to go and sights to see, to say nothing of the shopping the ladies always found necessary wherever they found a good store, that the new acquaintances were kept in the background of conversation.

The Dalken party hurried on board just before the time for leaving the wharf, and then followed the excitement and tasks of finding their staterooms and unpacking certain requisites for the trip of four hundred and sixty-one miles on the Yukon. This distance takes about forty hours, but it is unique because the scenes are forever changing as the boat proceeds on its course, through the deep gorges, cleft in mighty cliffs, or causing rapids through which the craft cuts its way, or over the spreading out of the waters when plains covered with gorgeous flowers are seen.

Wood is used as fuel, and the steamer stops

at certain wharves where it takes on fresh supplies of wood. It also stops at telegraph stations placed at intervals along its route. Sometimes a bear, again a moose, can be seen watching this strange river habitant, with its snout belching forth such smoke, wondering, doubtlessly whether it was born on land or sea, and what might result were one to attack it.

The Dalken party felt that at last they had a long stretch of peace, and time for enjoyment before them, and they grouped themselves upon the deck to make the most of the voyage. The fresh air and invigorating breeze, brought from great forests of spruce and pine, soon increased normal appetites to an abnormal state, so that the gong for the noonday meal was hailed with relief, and the young people jumped without delay, and urged Mr. Dalken to hurry to the dining-room.

The girls seated themselves as their places were designated by the steward, and before Mr. Dalken and the older members of his party were placed, the Captain came in and greeted them. Then it was found that they were given the seats of honor—at the Captain's table.

Conversation became very interesting, the

Captain telling of his thrilling exploits in the North Country and the funny persons he had met, going and coming on the Yukon for so many years.

"I have been in Alaska since the Klondike rush," said he, "and I have known many famous men of to-day who were only striplings in those times, with nothing in the world but their duffle bag and grit. I knew Robert Service personally, and I possess one of his autographed books, which I prize along with my personal treasures."

Then the Captain told of some of the famous outlaws he had known during the gold fever, and just as the soup was served he began a tale of a stampede in which he got mixed unwillingly, and had to explain his presence to the mounted police at the point of a gun.

Polly was leaning forward, in order to watch the Captain's expressive eyes, when she felt a hot stream of liquid run down her back. She cried out, and pushed suddenly back in the chair, thus overturning the waiter who was trying to place the soup before her.

The others at the table had been engrossed in the Captain's tale, and had not caught sight of the short waiter before he was measuring his

length upon the floor. Mal and Bob jumped up to assist him to his feet, and Polly began apologizing for her sudden action which had caused the accident.

"Why—is it—yes, it is—are you Mr. Smith?" exclaimed Mal, as he supported the little red-faced chap to stand upright.

To the surprise of every one in Mr. Dalken's party, Little Smithy, as he had been nicknamed, opened his mouth—and out came such a volley!

"Yeth, it ith Thmithy, I'd h-h-h-ha-v-v-e y-y-y-ou kn-n-ow! Ith it my fault i—i-f Mith Polly wanth to make a thow of me bef-f-o the Captainth gueth?" and the fat little blond youth actually whimpered in despair.

Mal was so amazed that he looked around the room as if for help, and then he saw the tall, thin Barton trying to take an order, at the same time that he kept his eyes upon the Captain's table.

Fortunately the Captain was a very mild-tempered man, and he saw at a glance that his guests were too well-bred to make any objection to Little Smithy's awkwardness and confusion, so he continued his narrative as though there had been no interruption.

Polly's Admirer, as the girls had called the

POLLY OBJECTED TO HOT SOUP RUNNING DOWN HER BACK.

blond little chap, found his wayward eyes straying to his goddess's face as of yore, even when he was supposed to be concentrating his efforts on serving the guests, but his voice was heard no more in protest or defense, and the girls finished the meal hoping against hope.

As soon as the girls had left the table, Mr. Dalken explained to the Captain how the two parties had met on the train, and how Barton managed to play major domo for the girls to their comfort and convenience. Then the Captain said: "I wired to Juneau for two good waiters for this trip, because the steamer is filled to capacity with tourists this year. Our late President Harding's visit has opened many eyes to the grand possibilities of Alaska as a resort. Most of my waiters are students working their way through college, and these two new men are here for the excursion without cost to them."

"They appeared to have unlimited funds on the train, and at the stop-overs," remarked Mr. Dalken.

"Tips!" replied the Captain without further explanation.

"But you say they just came on board."

"Yes, from Juneau and other places where they

have worked long enough to earn the expenses for the next lap of their journey. They told me all about it after coming on board last night. They had to report to me immediately after leaving the train, you know."

The sail to Dawson was not half long enough for Little Smithy, because he only saw his lady-love at meal-times, and Polly was generally too hungry to make him happy with a smile. But all things have an end—and so thought Smithy.

Before the steamer reached her wharf at Dawson, the fat little waiter had screwed up his courage and decided to take the fatal step. At least he called it that, in his state of tragic interpretation of the coming event.

Polly had wandered to a secluded nook of the boat, and stood alone gazing back at the churning waters created by the steamer. Between the serving of meals, if the work was finished, the college waiters were permitted to go to any part of the boat, providing they were not trespassing upon the rights or privacy of the passengers.

Smithy saw Polly alone, and he took his fate in both hands. He did not approach quietly, or in a way to surprise her, but he made a rush, and without saying a word, reached her

side before she dreamed that any one was near.

Eyes that pleaded for consideration gazed up in Polly's face, and she, standing at least twenty inches above the little lover's tow head, looked down at and pitied him. Her softened look loosed the tongue-tied worshipper's powers of speech, and he began.

Such eloquence in a losing cause seemed a crime, and the fact that his lisping and stuttering made his confession of love all the more laughable, brought tears to Polly's eyes. She placed both hands upon the round head as in blessing, and then said sympathetically; "It's too bad you have taken this sudden liking for me, Mr. Smith, and I thank you for your proposal, but I cannot entertain any offer at present."

The wooer turned, gave his lady-love one long, lingering look of unrequited love, and lisped: "Ith juth ath I thought—you are too wonderful for mere man!"

Then he fled, and Polly saw him no more.

CHAPTER XIII

CROWDED EVENTS

DAWSON of to-day is far different from the Dawson of '98, as the Captain had said. But the tourists, seeing the town for the first time, could have no concept of what it had been like in the gold-lust days. Now it was a quiet, clean city, having all modern improvements; also good hotels and public buildings well equipped. Then it was a riotous place, the dance halls and saloons doing such a business that prices soared sky-high according to the popularity of the rendezvous.

All about Dawson there are places to see: the Governor's mansion; the cabin where Robert Service lived, and which now is open to visitors. Then, from the summit of one of the hills, one can get a beautiful view of streams, mountains, valleys, and flowers, flowers, flowers everywhere. To the Dalken party, having been welcomed to the Arctic regions by icebergs and a frozen island,

these marvellous blooms of color seemed all the more incomprehensible at that latitude. Even the vegetables grow five times the size of those in our temperate climate, and it made Polly laugh to see rhubarb stalks as tall as a man, and as thick as Little Smithy, metaphorically speaking.

The Captain of the steamer, in bidding his guests farewell, had repeated his serious advice to Mr. Dalken—to be sure and delay the return voyage to the States until September month, when the autumnal coloring made Alaska look like the Garden of Eden.

On the trip from Dawson to Circle City, the tourists passed vast gold claims and coal lands, where the coal fairly bursts from the sides of the mountains, and cries out to be removed for the need of a clamoring world.

"I hear there are just such veins of coal in the mountains near Tanana, but it seems to me that every unmined coal field I have seen on this tour, offers great inducements to investors," remarked Mr. Tainter.

"This is the way I felt about the products of South America—all that the virgin land needs is capital to yield the best out of Old Mother Earth.

From Circle to Ft. Yukon was a short trip via boat, and here the tourists spent a night—the farthest north they had reached during their travels. From Ft. Yukon the river flows in a south-westerly direction, but with many bends and producing numerous beautiful islands in its course.

At Tanana, which is below the junction of the Yukon with its mighty tributary, the Tanana River, the Dalken party stopped to investigate the coal fields. Several days passed during this visit, and the summer was advancing so fast that the girls dreaded a second experience similar to the one they had had upon arriving in Alaskan waters. They were reassured, however, by being told that there was little risk of meeting the icebergs late in the summer—they generally broke away and floated out to the gulf in early summer, or during July.

Nevertheless, it was with a sense of relief that their river craft reached Ruby, then Louden, and after that Koyukuk Station. Here the great Koyukuk River joined the great Yukon, and flowed on in one of the famous greatest rivers of the world. Nulato and Kaltag gave the tourists of their rare specimens of carved ivory and

precious totems, and the ladies found themselves overladen with woven materials seldom heard of, but nevertheless highly appreciated because they were of intrinsic value to the young decorators.

Mr. Tainter had been told of the finest coal fields of Alaska being round about Koyukuk and Nulato, but the girls and ladies were impatient to reach Nome, and go aboard their steamer, so he gave up the plan to stop over for several days at Koyukuk, and they all left with regrets, yet with relief.

The coal fields near the Yukon, just before the town of Anvik is reached, convinced Mr. Tainter that British sovereigns might be well invested in such a way as would bring vast returns; and with such splendid facilities for shipping on the Yukon, the export rates would not be very high.

After leaving Anvik the Yukon follows a south-westerly, then a direct westerly, direction. At last, it makes a sudden turn and, apparently about to run north, it changes its mind and pours its flood of waters into a wide mouth, island studded. St. Michael is the port here, and there they found Captain Hall waiting with patience almost at an end.

Once more on board the *Atlanta II* the ar-

rivals hailed the Captain and his crew with delight, and the Captain remarked, the first chance he got to say one word: "We'll be frozen up all winter if you don't let us get under way without delay."

"Nonsense, Captain," laughed Mr. Tainter. "We have heard all along the route from Skagway to this port that September in Alaska is the balmiest and finest season in the year."

"We want to visit the great reindeer station yonder, before we start homewards, Captain," declared Polly, pointing northwards to the place she had heard about.

"Oh, well, that won't take us long. At least, I will feel as if we were going on our way back, even if it is sailing north," chuckled Captain Hall, who could not refuse Polly anything she wanted.

The trip to the reindeer stations repaid the tourists fourfold for the time it took, and from that stop Captain Hall took a westerly course and stopped at Nome, the famous port of the Far North. They did not extend the visit here to any length of time, however, and then the *Atlanta II* started on her homeward voyage.

Down along the east coast of Alaska they

went, hugging the shore all the way, and never tiring of watching the varied scenes of Nature, and the natives on the land. They passed Nunivak Island, where the coal ridges could be plainly seen in layers above the ground.

"Do you know, Dalken, it makes me fairly boil to get my hands on a pick and shovel and start in heaving that coal out of the earth," declared Mr. Tainter.

Mr. Dalken laughed. "You wouldn't heave more than two to six spadefuls before you'd be sorry for yourself."

"All the same, I hope this zeal will last until I get back to England. Can't you see the men sitting about the conference table, hearing me soar to the clouds about Alaska and its great storehouse of treasures?"

"I trust you will, because I feel as enthusiastic about developing the land as you are. I am planning to interest as many financiers as I can meet, before taking new steps in any other direction," said Mr. Dalken.

Leaving Nunivak Island behind, the *Atlanta II* sailed southeast, and reached Kuskokwim Bay. This sheet of water was crossed and the projecting jut of land which divides Kuskokwim Bay

from Kutulak Bay, was sighted and passed. From this, Cape Newenham, Captain Hall steered the vessel across the Behring Sea, entered one of the many straits, which afford passage between the islands off the Peninsula of Alaska, and passed into the gulf.

The tourists dreaded the ordeal of sailing across the gulf again, but the Captain had no such plan in view. He said he had asked for and had been given a new chart for the waters along the entire coast, and he was going to follow that line. Hence the travelers were treated to the autumn coloring of the wonderful scenery that stretched from Sand Point, on the Alaska Peninsula, along shore, until they reached Vancouver Island. And never was coloring more appreciated by mortals than it was by Polly and Eleanor, their artistic sense being satiated by the thousands of miles of beauty.

Thus far, during the hubbub of being on the go, and visiting something, somewhere, every day from the time the castaways were rescued and carried to Seward, to the day they reached Vancouver, the cause of this Alaskan tour had been placed in a dark closet of Mr. Dalken's mind and the door bolted. He had not given up his chief

idea in visiting the Far North, but he found he would have to await a time when quiet and rest would offer the finest opportunity for his suit.

This opportunity came with the announcement from Captain Hall that he proposed following the coast-line all the way to Victoria, on Vancouver Island. But no one on board dreamed that this had been Mr. Dalken's orders, because the Captain was sworn to secrecy, and the Captain, having a romance of his own tucked away in his heart, readily promised everything.

Thus it came to pass that every beautiful night when the sun hid his face behind the veil of mist that hovered over the sea, and produced the soft twilight that is night in Alaska, Mr. Dalken and Mrs. Courtney would sit upon the upper deck and grow quite confidential in their talks.

Polly and Eleanor kept all intruders away from the sacred precinct, and, as they anxiously watched the progress of this much-desired and well-matched alliance of their two best friends, they felt sure that the long voyage would bring about results.

But night after night went by, and day by day passed even as the *Atlanta II* passed by every

new coast scene, and still there came no announcement of an engagement.

"I hope to goodness it is settled before we reach land," exclaimed Eleanor, anxiously.

"That's what I hope and pray," added Polly. "It will be such fun to celebrate on board the *Atlanta II.*"

Dodo and Lois shared the state secret, but they were not admitted to the secret conclaves held between Polly and Eleanor in their room at night. And to all the plans and plots arranged for the celebration of such an event as Dalky's engagement, the two principals appeared serenely oblivious. But were they really so?

The *Atlanta II* had followed the Inside Passage from Baranoff Island southward, and now as it entered the harbor at Vancouver, the girls realized that they were destined to be deeply disappointed in the crowning event of the entire trip. Dalky and Mrs. C—— had not as much as hinted at an engagement!

Finally the little steamer that had been the home of the tourists for so long, dropped her anchor in Vancouver waters, and the moment for which Mr. Dalken had waited so long and patiently came.

"I want you all to remain quietly on board, while I go to attend to a very important errand. I expect several letters and telegrams awaiting me at a certain address in Vancouver, and these will determine my future course to a great extent."

Without further explanation, Mr. Dalken got into the small boat and was rowed across the placid waters to the dock. His friends stood leaning over the rail, wishing him God-speed on his quest. And he looked back, laughed and called to the smiling row of faces: "That is a good wish and I trust it may be as you said." Then he was off.

Mrs. Courtney seemed as calm and undisturbed after seeing Mr. Dalken leave, as though he had stepped to the salon for a trifle. Polly and Eleanor watched intently, because they felt certain that their Dalky had gone to the city to ask about marriage licenses, and learn the custom in Canada.

"She doesn't act like any one about to be married," was Eleanor's comment.

"I'm afraid we were mistaken again," sighed Polly." I suppose Dalky has gone ashore for business reasons alone."

"I'm wondering if our heart's desire for them will ever come true," and Eleanor sighed also.

"If that wonderful sail along the coast, with all those heavenly nights when they sat tête-à-tête and talked themselves dumb could not bring about a proposal from Dalky and an acceptance from Mrs. C—— then I'll say they never will pair off," declared Dodo, impatiently.

The girls gossiped more or less for an hour, then they sought the boys and proposed a game of shuffle-board to while away another tedious hour before Mr. Dalken would return.

A lively game was in full swing when Captain Hall called to them that the boat was returning—it was sooner than had been expected—and now the girls saw Mrs. Courtney stand watching nervously, and her hands clasping and unclasping without her realizing the fact.

"Now, Dalky certainly went on shore for license information," whispered Polly to the girls. "Just look at Mrs. C——!"

Mr. Dalken came aboard smiling as usual, his hand filled with letters and telegrams, but he seemed more concerned about having a private conference with Mr. Tainter than he was over any wedding. The girls watched with chilling

spirits, and all they had to cheer their zero hopes was the way Mrs. Courtney paced nervously up and down the deck alone.

Mr. Dalken and Mr. Tainter had been talking behind closed doors for about five minutes, when Mr. Dalken came to the door and called to Mrs. Courtney. "Will you come in for a moment, Mrs. Courtney?"

This was not romantic at all, and Polly felt sad over the way all their plans had miscarried. She had about decided to give up the match-making between these two dear friends, when Eleanor drew her arm through hers and led her over to a place near the rail where one could look straight into the salon opposite.

"There! does that look like marriage or discussing licenses?" snapped she, nodding her head at the glass window in the door.

Polly looked, and saw the three friends indoors comparing two photographs. Then they bent their heads close together and glanced over several papers. Some of these were telegrams, and one was a letter of several pages.

"Nolla, thus endeth our last lesson for them!" sighed Polly, drawing her friend away from the sight.

"It's all business, business, business with men! I'm sick and tired of them all. When one can have such a woman as *she* is, and lose her on account of developing heathen lands! I'm mad all through!"

The girls had not reached the far end of the deck, however, before Mr. Tainter hurried from the salon and called to them.

"Come here, Polly and Eleanor. Your friends have a surprise for you, and they want you to go in first."

"Maybe, after all——" was all Polly could gasp, because Eleanor was dragging her at full speed along the deck and up to the door.

Mr. Tainter stood and watched them run, then he turned and sought his nephew, to talk over coal and salmon.

Polly and Eleanor saw their two friends seated at the table upon which were scattered the letters and papers they had seen through the door-window. But the two photographs were face down upon the cloth.

"Girls, we have something to tell you, and when the introduction is over, you may express your opinion freely," began Mr. Dalken.

Polly and Eleanor exchanged smiling looks,

and both of them could have told these two before them just what that "something to tell" would be. Little they guessed!

"Sit down beside us, children," begged Mrs. Courtney, making room on the divan near her chair.

The girls sat down, keeping their eyes upon Mr. Dalken, and then he began.

"Soon after our rescue from the ice island, Mr. Tainter told me how it happened that he was sent to Alaska by his group of directors of the corporation in which he was financially interested. Thus it came out that the man who was to investigate the possibilities of placing capital in developing certain resources of Alaska, had died suddenly, and the choice of sending an able man fell to our friend's lot. The name of the other man, deceased, was Courtney."

At this, the girls started and looked from Mr. Dalken to Mrs. Courtney, but neither one said what was felt.

"I ascertained the full name, place of business, and also other details concerning this Courtney, and found that the story fitted in word for word with a story I had heard before from a very dear friend."

Polly and Eleanor began to feel the thrills of expectation creep up and down their spines, and they could hardly keep from shouting and dancing—they knew what would follow.

"Well, I kept my own counsel until I made reasonably sure that this man had been the husband of a woman who had separated from him soon after marrying him; then I confined all I had heard from the Englishman to this lady, and she advised me what steps to take to secure proof and certainty that these Courtneys were one man. Here I have such proofs. I brought them from Vancouver where they have been waiting in the registered post for my coming. Look, girls."

Polly and Eleanor were then shown two photographs. One they had seen long ago, when Mrs. Courtney was hunting in her papers for an old contract she wished to show the girls. And the other was one recently delivered to Mr. Dalken through the English mail.

"Would you say this was the same man, allowing for the change of styles and years in age?" asked he.

"We certainly would, Dalky," chorused the girls.

"And here are messages, and the letter from

the corporation that sent Tainter to Alaska. They have given us a full history of the deceased man's life, the name of his young bride, and a record of the legal separation. Mrs. Courtney is now free from old bonds."

Before the girls could rush over and hug their dear friend, Mr. Dalken hastened to add: "Listen, now, you romantic match-makers: I need you to witness what I say right now, to your friend, Mrs. C——: My dearly beloved, will you accept me for your future husband?"

To the girls' astonishment, Mrs. Courtney smiled and took the extended hands of her friend and replied:

"Before these two dear witnesses, I will accept you as my future husband. Will you take me for your wife?"

There was no need for an answer from the suitor, but he did answer solemnly: "I do. Now send the children out to play and to tell the glad tidings that to-morrow at noon we shall call our friends on the *Atlanta II* to attend the ceremony."

CHAPTER XIV

HONEYMOONERS

But Polly and Eleanor were not to be treated in such a peremptory manner—they, too, had something to say about this match for which they took all the credit.

"O-oooh! We're so glad, Dalky!" shouted Polly, springing over and throwing her arms about his neck.

"Isn't it just too wonderful for anything!" cried Eleanor, taking Mrs. Courtney by storm, and almost smothering her with hugs.

"Almost as wonderful as the scenery of Alaska, eh?" was Mr. Dalken's reply, as soon as he could catch his breath.

When order was established once more the four sat down to plan a celebration.

"But first of all, tell Nolla and me again how Mr. Tainter happened to mention Mr. Court-

ney's name in connection with his coming to Alaska," asked Polly.

Mr. Dalken repeated the story with the embellishments which had been added since Mr. Tainter first spoke of the corporation that had sent him to investigate the advisability of locating in Alaska.

"Just think of it, girls," said Mr. Dalken, "if the *Atlanta* had never gone on the iceberg, we might never have learned from Mr. Tainter that his associate in business had died. After we all became so well acquainted through mutual miseries, he confided in me about his affairs. And I promised, should I survive him, that I would cable his office. If he survived me, he would do the same for me. Then I heard of the Mr. Courtney who had been chosen to come to Alaska in his place."

"Perhaps we all would have met him if he *had* come," ventured Eleanor.

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Mrs. Courtney, with distress.

"Hardly that," quickly added Mr. Dalken. "Because Courtney would have arrived in Alaska long before we landed at Los Angeles. He would not have crossed our path, and would have

hurried his journey, to start back for England as soon as possible. With Tainter, however, it was a different matter. Tainter refused to make it a strictly business affair, because he wished his nephew to see all of the country he could with an idea of starting him in some big concern in Alaska and letting him work to the top in the undertaking. Then the wreck threw us all closely together, and this is the result."

The four smiled happily at each other, then Mr. Dalken said: "Well, if you girls are not going to herald the news, we must!"

"Why not all four march out together and surprise the others?" suggested Eleanor.

"I'll remain right where I am," declared Mrs. Courtney, blushing like a miss of sixteen.

Mr. Dalken laughed as the girls had never heard him laugh before—care-free and happy. And they each took hold of an arm and marched him out of the room.

Mr. Tainter had heralded the news, however, and it was being discussed by all the friends when the trio from the salon joined the others.

"I am selected by the girls as best man," announced Mr. Tainter.

"And Dodo and I say we girls must be bridesmaids," called Lois, eagerly.

"And the boys declare they will be ushers, and Mrs. Alex. and I have decided to be matrons of honor—but where will you find the guests, when all of us are on the staff of helpers?" laughed Mrs. Adair.

"It may be that you will have to perform without an audience," laughed Polly.

"Captain Hall and his crew have offered to serve the wedding breakfast," said Mal.

"It will be another case of the Biblical story—going in to the highways and byways and bringing in the guests to the wedding," remarked Eleanor, smiling.

"As long as it is a wedding, what difference does it make about guests? If every one prefers to act as a member on the committee of arrangements, we can dispense with the guests," laughed Polly.

But what really took place was a surprise to every one. That evening, while the girls were poring over their plans for the celebration, Mr. Dalken and Mrs. Courtney suddenly vanished. They were not missed at first, but when some one needed to consult Mr. Dalken and found he was

not with Mr. Tainter, and had not been seen for the past hour, suspicions were raised. A general search revealed nothing, and all hands were running hither and thither, with flash-lights and lanterns, when a boat pulled alongside the vessel.

"Look there—who is that?" demanded Jenks.

The side of the little craft was soon lined with questioning faces, and the small group in the boat looked up and laughed.

"Well, friends, the die is cast—for better or worse," was the announcement that came from a man in the boat. It was Dalky's voice.

Then Captain Hall assisted two ladies to step up to the deck, and he followed with Mr. Dalken. The friends along the rail were silent for a moment, then when they saw Mrs. Courtney draw off a glove and display a hoop of diamonds, they expressed their opinions in different ways.

"Oh, you horrid creatures!" cried Eleanor, sitting down upon a coil of rope and crying with annoyance.

"To think that we went to all the trouble we did in New York, then down the coast to the West Indies, and after that on to South America, where Nolla and I had all we could do to prove that man schemer was only a fortune hun-

ter who wanted to marry Mrs. C—— for her money—and now you go and get married at the office of a Justice of the Peace, without even taking us as witnesses!" And Polly threw herself upon a wicker divan and refused to listen to reason.

"Hush, you silly children," commanded Mr. Dalken, as sternly as he could under the happy circumstances. "Don't you know it would have been impossible for us to bring a Justice of the Peace to the boat? And even as it is now, we propose being married in the good old fashion as soon as we get home. That home may be in Pebbly Pit, or in Chicago, or back in New York City—it remains to be seen where the ceremony had better take place."

"Why not in South America—on the Magdalena River, where half your guests are working?" retorted Eleanor.

"And show Paul and Pete an example—how to behave themselves under similar circumstances," laughed Polly, her anger forgotten.

"It's Tom who needs instruction—not Paul," was Eleanor's reply.

"I wouldn't put all the blame on poor Tom," remarked Mr. Dalken. "First of all it is Polly

we need to teach the art of engaging herself to a fine young man with such constancy as I have seldom found."

"Oh, as for constancy, Tom represents all that, and more; but I have not retired from business yet," was Polly's indifferent reply.

"Here! here! what has this to do with our celebration?" demanded Dodo, clapping her hands to attract attention.

"That's what we boys say!" grumbled Mal.

"What interest do you suppose we boys have in planning for those chaps in South America?" added Bob.

"A bird in the hand is worth a whole nest in the bush," quoted Red, laughingly.

"Of course—every one knows that. Come on, Cap. let's start cooking a bang-up feast," said Corney.

"The Captain can't follow those orders now, because he signed up for other arrangements not an hour before," said Mr. Tainter, to his nephew.

"What d'ye mean?" wondered Corney.

"Why, Mrs. Dalken and I have been talking over a trip to celebrate this occasion, and we thought it would be delightful if we invited my comrades in perils and pleasure in touring

Alaska, to go on a short honeymoon voyage to Hawaii. The good Captain agreed to take charge of another yacht, provided we can lease one in San Francisco upon our return to that city. Then we will send this staunch little tub back to Seward, with our blessing and best wishes for its continuance in serving the public," Mr. Dalken concluded, and watched the expressions of the young folks, while Mrs. Dalken—still unaccustomed to her change of name, and replying to Mrs. C—— more often than to the new title of Mrs. Dalken—smiled in anticipation of their acceptance.

"Dalky! Do you mean it? We are all to go on this honeymoon trip with you?" cried Polly, in a shrill voice of excitement.

"If we can persuade you to do so," returned Mr. Dalken.

"Say—will a duck swim, Dalky?" demanded Eleanor.

The other members of the party laughed heartily at Nolla's exclamation, and then Mr. Tainter spoke.

"We should dearly love to go on this trip with you, Mr. Dalken, but you know how it is with me—I am expected back in England before the

first of October. And Corney will go with me, of course."

"I was afraid so," returned Mr. Dalken. "But you know I am not going to lose you, Tainter. You have done more for me than can be repaid in mere words or favors. I'll always be grateful to you."

The two men shook hands quite spontaneously, and the others smiled because they understood.

"Are we going all the way back to 'Frisco?" asked Dodo.

"Yes, because the Captain has to see about the insurance of his little steam yacht—it was a total loss, you know, and we can testify to it for him. That is a very important business matter to attend to without delay," explained Jenks, who had joined the group.

"And who will man this vessel on its way back to Seward?" asked Polly, gazing around at the crew.

"No one present," laughed Allen. "We are all booked for Hawaii, with our Captain."

"Oh, goody! It will be just like taking a whole ready-made family on a honeymoon," giggled Eleanor.

"The agency at 'Frisco will attend to sending

a crew on board the *Atlanta II* to Seward," explained Captain Hall, to the girls.

"Don't let them take the name with it," suggested Dodo.

"No, Captain! do keep the name for our new yacht," was the chorus of voices that seconded Dodo's suggestion.

"That is exactly what I want to do—loan the name of my gallant little vessel, the *Atlanta I* for this voyage. And when we get back I hope to have enough money to buy another yacht and christen her after her predecessor," said the Captain.

So the wedding feast was postponed until the party could celebrate it properly in San Francisco. There would be ample time for this, during the necessary delay in the programme made by Mr. Dalken to charter a yacht for the Hawaiian cruise.

Once more the vessel under the management of good Captain Hall sailed into the Golden Gate harbor, and pulled alongside the wharf to allow her passengers to go ashore. And once more the Dalken party entered the city, feeling as though they had been gone from it for ages—

so many experiences had they had crowded into their months' trip.

That evening Mr. Dalken called his comrades together and invited them to be present the following evening at six, at the church ceremony of marrying Mr. and Mrs. Dalken, wedded according to English law in Vancouver, and now to be wedded after the accepted American custom. He had obtained the license in San Francisco and no further delay seemed necessary.

"Dalky isn't saying a word about a party, but I just know that Mrs. C—— (the girls could not remember to call her anything else) is going to make this a record-breaking event," whispered Dodo, to her chums.

"Yes, because Corney told me that his uncle is helping the two of them in arranging for a big time. Corney says they are going to have the best jazz players in the city to make our toes tingle," added Lois.

"Dear me! I haven't a decent rag to wear to such a function!" exclaimed Eleanor.

"We'll have to draw on our letters of credit and go shopping first thing in the morning," declared Polly.

The wee sma' hours were passed by the girls

in talking over and listing the items of dress to be purchased the next day. When they finally succumbed to sleepiness, everything had been noted upon paper, even to the rice that they planned to deluge the bride and groom with.

The next day a frenzy of shopping and then a frenzy of dressing for the grand occasion occupied all, even the boys in the party, because their wardrobes had not been replenished as fully as the ladies had managed to replenish theirs.

Then came the rush in automobiles to the church, where they were expected to look serious and reverent while hearing their two friends blessed in the holy state of matrimony. It was well that the rector lost no time in giving his benediction, for the girls were ready to pounce upon him had he dallied too long.

That evening, in the small, private ball-room of the hotel where the tourists were stopping, the wedding guests, limited in number but not limited in enjoyment, danced until Polly said:

"I declare! I've worn the sole clear off this new satin slipper! I can't dance another step!"

"Neither can I, Mal!" sighed Eleanor. "Go ask one of the crew to jazz with you."

But the crew were having their own fun at the

party. When they discovered a buffet supper with fruit punch and all "trimmings" that go with a feast where money is no object, they were in the seventh heaven of delight. Never had they had such a wonderful supper spread before them.

The favors given by the bride and groom to all guests present showed that economy was not a virtue just now in Mr. Dalken's life. At last, the jazz players could not tear another note from their musical instruments, because their muscles were lame; so the party agreed to disband. One last minuet was requested, however, and for this event every one but the bride and groom had provided bags of rice, and enough old shoes to start a tannery.

Mr. and Mrs. Dalken had to lead off, and every time they passed a new couple, they were showered with rice. Finally the floor was so thickly carpeted with kernels that dancing was impossible, and the entire company marched out of the room, following the newly-weds, and the lights were turned out.

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